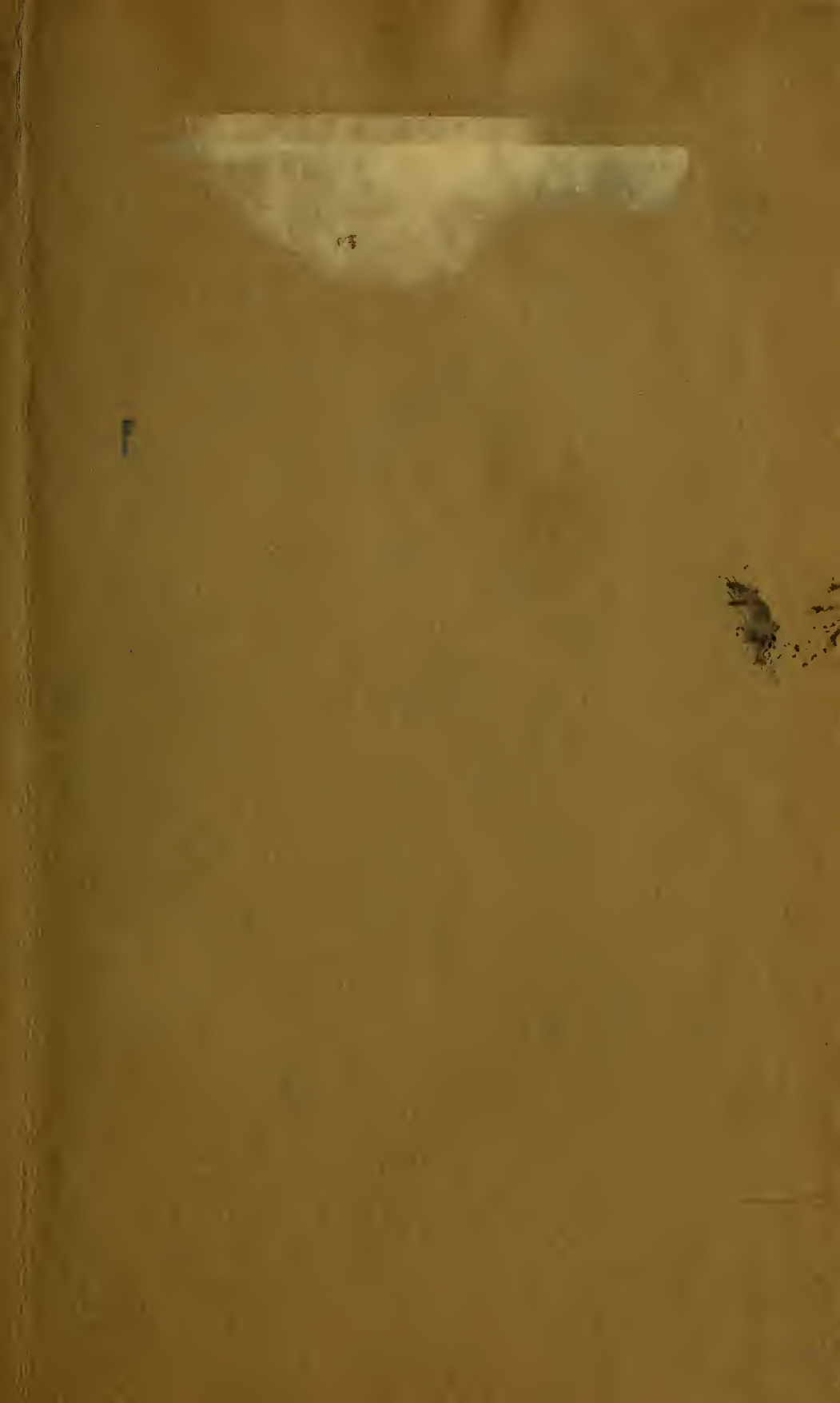




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Vergilius Maro, Publius

THEODORE CHICKERING WILLIAMS

GEORGE HERBERT PALMER



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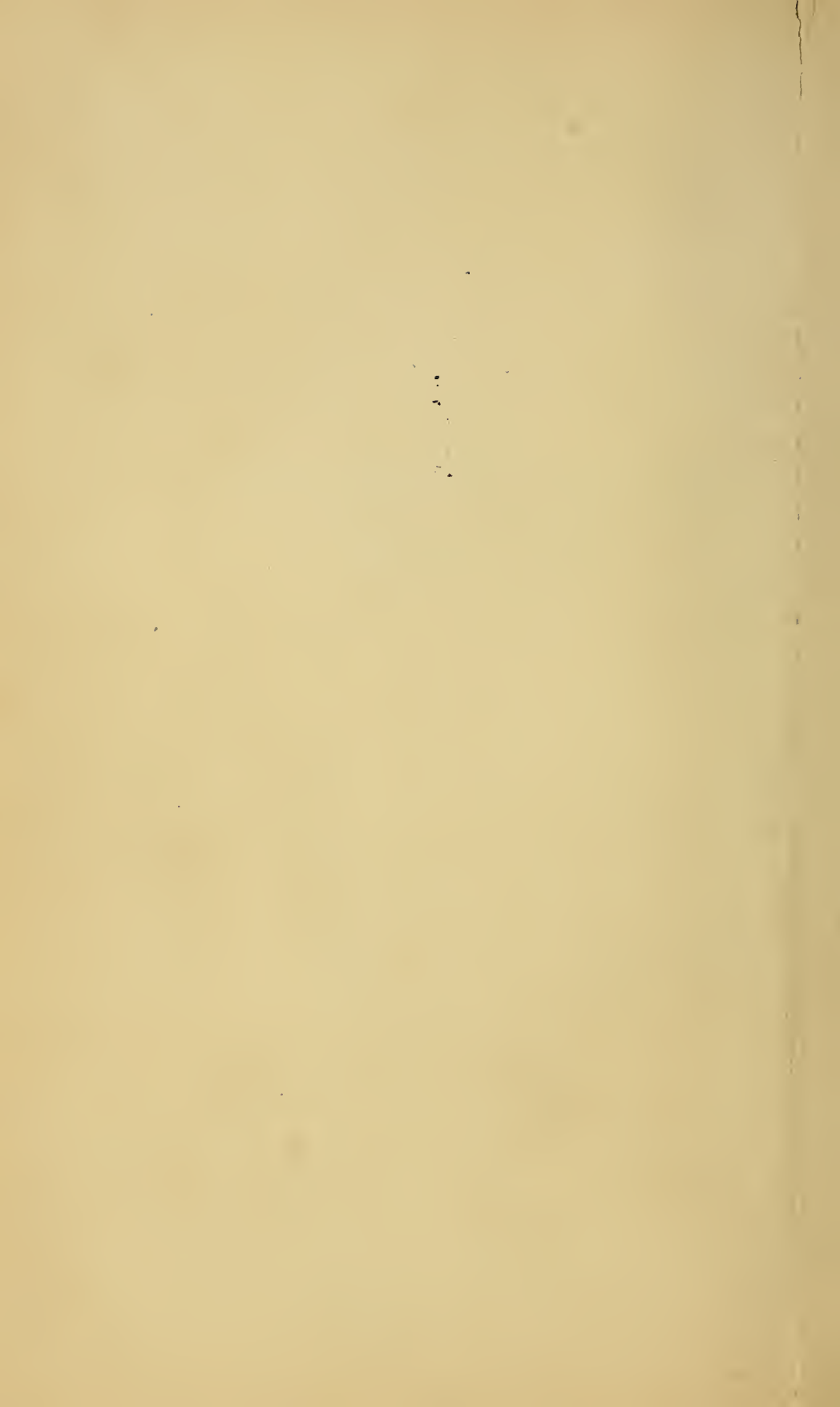
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THE  
GEORGICS AND ECLOGUES  
OF VIRGIL





## INTRODUCTION

A PECULIAR pathos attaches to artistic work interrupted by death. Three weeks before Mr. Williams died he said to me joyfully, "I have reached the end of my *Georgics* and *Eclogues*. Of course all needs revision, and to that I shall at once address myself. But I wrote the last line today." It was too true. He never wrote another. His twenty years' companionship with Virgil was ended.

To this august and elusive poet he was early drawn, perhaps by a certain kinship of nature. In every time of fatigue, anxiety or affliction — and such times befell this eager and joyous spirit by no means rarely — Virgil became his refuge and solace. Turning a few pages of his sensitive Latin into his own hardly less sensitive English freed him from annoyance. In the Virgil classes of his two schools he had opportunity to try the effects of his work on young and groping minds. Accordingly, when in 1907, he published through the Houghton Mifflin Company his version of the *Aeneid*, it was at once acclaimed as an extraordinary performance. In a greater degree than any other translation of Virgil it harmonizes the conflicting claims of poetry and scholarship. One reads it as an English poem, heedless of a constraining original; yet the many shades of that original are reflected here with a fullness and accuracy unequalled even in prose. The

unit of meaning is not the single word, but the word in its connections, the sentence, sometimes the paragraph. The schoolboy may not be able to match words with Virgil, but Virgil employed words to convey a certain significance and beauty; the test of translation, as Williams understood it, is whether the English mind receives that significance and beauty. To reproduce the Latin means of conveying an impression, without conveying the impression itself, was, in Williams' judgment, pedantic folly. As a poet he felt, and could make others feel, the subtle suggestions of poetry, and he had lived so long with Latin that for him it had ceased to be a dead language. He wrote it, spoke it, thought in it. After reading a passage of Virgil, he could hold it in memory and could try renderings of it as he walked the streets. Love, therefore, a passion for beauty, and sympathy with an exalted thinker, have had more to do with shaping his version of the *Aeneid* than grammar or dictionary.

Naturally the piece to which Williams first addressed himself was that which embodies Virgil's maturest mind. When this was fully explored, he turned to study more minutely the stages through which that mind had passed. Fully recognizing the immaturity of the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, he found them interesting on this very account, and believed others might find them so if he could present them properly. To that endeavor he gave all the time he could command during the last seven years of his life. Could he have had six months

more, all would have been brought to the standards of his own exacting taste.

Receiving his papers, I have merely attempted to set them in order for the press. After correcting the usual copyist's errors, I have chosen among the multitude of alternative readings those which seemed best to accord with Williams' mind, regardless of my own. His and my methods of composition are so unlike that I soon found it useless to attempt such a revision as he himself had planned. The taste of one writer cannot wisely be superposed on that of another. I am no Latinist, and patching such artistry at any one spot involved operations too wide either for my powers or my sense of rightful ownership. I have left the work, therefore, substantially as I found it. Through and through it is his.

Williams' estimate of Virgil is well stated in the preface to the Library edition of his *Aeneid*. In the preface to the Riverside edition he has stated it again. The earlier piece seems to me a more just and illuminating criticism of Virgil's strength and weakness than any of equal length with which I am acquainted. While acknowledging the enormous extent of Virgil's borrowings, he believed them to be shaped by a highly individual personality with a view to ends of its own. His fullest comment on the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, and his indication of their place in the total scheme of Virgil's life, is best given in one of his unpublished papers. A summary of this will form an appropriate introduction to the present volume.

Virgil learned poetic craftsmanship under Alexandrine tutors, with whom scholarly reproduction of the literature of the past had superseded all desire for original creation. Plagiarism was systematized and honorable. We can best understand such ideals if we recall similar conditions in the Age of Elizabeth. To England the Renaissance came late and was already much more advanced on the Continent. Accordingly the English sonneteers of that day, seeing abundant beauty elsewhere, drew more than half their material from the riches of France and Italy. Still more submissive to foreign influence was Latin poetry in Virgil's time; for the Romans had less poetic impulse than the English, and the inherited beauty stored in Greece was still more overwhelming.

Among the traditional Greco-Roman themes was that of the idealized country. In the country it was thought one might lead the simple life; casting off the complex artificialities of the city, one might there experience elemental pleasures. Almost every age dreams such a dream and immediately proceeds to falsify it. The simplicity of the country is rude; the poet who presents it is tempted to adorn. Life in a cottage easily becomes a masquerade, with its own set of conventions more rigid and artificial than those of the city itself. No form of poetry is so unreal, so manifestly absurd as the finished pastoral. Occasionally it has furnished a good enough opportunity for the practice of youthful pens, as in the case of Spenser, Milton, and Pope.



But when employed by mature writers — as by Gray in the *Elegy*, Shenstone in the *Pastoral Ballad*, and Arnold in *Thyrsis* — it is apt to be transformed into something quite different, through the body of personal emotion which fills it.

Virgil's pastorals are both young and old. Genius and folly are intimately associated in them. For the most part they were written in Virgil's youth, when he was fascinated by Theocritus and was gaining flexibility of style by practising the literary modes of his day. They are his school-exercises, which have been taken far too seriously by posterity. Hardly any other body of ancient verse so small has exercised so large, and so doubtfully beneficial, an influence over the poetry of aftertime. But there is more in them than pleasing folly. Virgil was a genuine lover of the country, and his *Eclogues* contain delightful touches of nature. They abound too in skilful phrases, such as men like to remember and to quote. And then there are compassions and sympathies here which are truly Virgil's own and do not belong to the poets whom he imitates. Where before Virgil had pity appeared? With him it is everywhere. He knows the farmer's meagre lot. He hears the exile's bitter cry. The pangs of disprized love he paints with more truth than the pastoral requires. The perishing affairs of mortals move him to tears, yet do not breed despair. He is no pessimist. Better conditions are ever waiting. In the ardor of his hope and pity he is more allied with the Christian than with

the Greek temper. This Christianizing temper of pitying expectancy comes to fullest expression in the *Fourth Eclogue*.

This brief piece forms one of the notable enigmas of literature. To see in it a heralding of the Christ, as the Middle Ages did, is to perceive too much and to be too definite. To say with the German scholar that it is mere complimentary verse on the birth of a friend's child is to be no less erroneously definite. Who the infant was we had better not inquire, nor from what source the messianic adumbrations were drawn. Rome was pretty fully acquainted with oriental religions. What deserves attention is the young poet's faith.

In these sixty lines a prophetic vision is presented of a race which after ages of sin and sorrow is to be restored to primal innocence and joy. Nor is this a merely political forecast of a Roman empire at peace. Supernatural agencies here produce supernatural results. The new world will indeed have a just government and be without war; but it will also be without the husbandman and the trader, without the corruption of the arts; the earth will feed mankind as the free gift of heaven, and the gods will once more mingle with men. This consummation is the appointed end of a mysterious "process of the suns." From all eternity the world has been under a beneficent divine plan. The happy season, so near at hand, is the fulfilment of everlasting decrees of destiny and Jove. In Virgil's vision, no less than in Isaiah's, is implied a dra-

matic conception of the moral government of the universe. He shared, it is true, the opinion of his age and placed a state of nature and innocence in the remote past. But the forward-looking victorious note is his also. He is ever both scholar and prophet. The restoration of those vanished glories is to be the achievement of divine men, of a divine man, a savior.

No wonder then that the Middle Ages counted him a sacred poet, since his constant mood of pitying expectancy culminates in the conception of a savior of mankind. Christianity was not in error in reverencing his ardent supernaturalism, his trust in a divine order of government evolved through cycles of pre-appointed time, and his exaltation of a Prince of Peace. But his non-Christian elements were of about equal consequence. His millennium is not reared upon ruin. He has no aversion, as the Christian had, to this present world, nor does he reject the beautiful pagan past. The dualism that lay deep in early Christianity he never knew. During ages of monkery his poetry kept alive the love of nature, the sense of joy and beauty. It was this "pagan suckled in a creed outworn" who was both the herald and the enricher of Christianity. Into the very bosom of the Latin Church he brought airs from Greece, so rendering it easier for the men of the Renaissance to treat nature as divine and man as free. Virgil is both the last of the ancients and the first of the moderns.

Pity and hope being thus the saving elements among the thin conventionalities of the *Eclogues*, Virgil retains them in the *Georgics* but transforms them through the addition of sterner stuff. In the *Georgics* toyland has disappeared; the realities of the country claim attention. Nor do we hear anything more of a Utopia, a blessed condition to be dreamed of until some day it appears. Virgil's maturer mind is fixed on the process by which salvation from evil may be secured. It is a process which requires full coöperation between the individual and the State.

The reign of Augustus brought security to city, country, and sea throughout the Roman world. Civil disturbances had ceased, and foreign were only occasional and small. All Italians, as Roman citizens, enjoyed rights and opportunities unknown before. The arts of peace came forward. Commerce and agriculture, domestic comfort, the accumulation of wealth, books both for instruction and enjoyment claimed the place in public attention which until recently had been held by campaigning, civil strife, plunder, and measures for guarding personal safety.

Virgil's patriotism was strong, his intimacy with the ruling powers close. Augustus he honored as the one who had brought about prosperity, and he loved him for the favor shown to his own literary work. To make that work effective in consolidating the State of Augustus became his sacred task. The welfare of Italy he saw must depend in the



long run on its success in agriculture. If the toil of the farmer were scorned and the interests of the population became centered in city life, Italy must remain weak and draw its food supplies from other lands. Virgil, country-born and country-loving, takes it as his special office to dignify the farmer's life. He will bring together the largest knowledge of its methods, making his exposition attractive by beautiful words, melodious sound, stimulating anecdote, exalting myth, and religious suggestion. He will show how widely honored in the past farm life has been, how satisfactory are its rewards, how large its opportunities for quiet enjoyment in home and field. None of its occupations shall be counted unworthy of poetic treatment. Beauty, picturesqueness and the fullest information shall allure the farmer to his handbook. Such, as Williams conceived it, is the patriotic purpose of Virgil in his novel enterprise. That his didactic and aesthetic aims do not always harmonize is plain; and where they conflict, he as a poet is chiefly solicitous for beauty. But the betterment of the State through a knowledge of agriculture is everywhere his formative theme.

Abundant attention, however, is given to the farmer's individual welfare and to the difficulties which attend it. No man can pass through the world without large cause for sadness. The future is always uncertain, life short and liable to sudden overthrow, poverty abounds, men are self-willed, dull, not easily brought to prudence and piety.

The one hope for pitiable mankind lies in labor. The *Georgics* are a continuous chant on the worth of work. Far from being ignored, the hardship of the farmer's life is put forward as a redemptive agency. None so fully as the farmer is trained in incessant watchfulness, swift adaptation to changing conditions, a never-resting judgment, and a recognition that bodily toil is to run through every hour of every day. But work is the friend of man, not his foe; and this the farmer more than others understands. The connection between energy and success is more immediately apparent in his case than elsewhere, and failure more directly traceable to slackness. But slackness being in the blood of us all, Virgil will let no page leave his hand without its insistent appeal to work, work, work! Only when this individual appeal is heeded will the world be beautiful and happy.

The *Georgics* then show a large advance in Virgil's thought. The country is no longer looked upon as a stage for the masquerading of impossible shepherds; it is a training ground for patriotism and moral endeavor. A golden age is indeed at hand, rendered possible by a wise, kind, and powerful prince. But it awaits the call of each one of us. It will not appear until compelled. The blessings of our bounteous earth can be had through no other means than work.

To these remarks on the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* only so much need be added in regard to the *Aeneid* as to indicate how it supplements the two earlier

pieces. In it the individual factor, so strongly insisted on in the *Georgics*, retreats, giving place to profounder if less definable agencies. Throughout the worlds of nature and man run divine purposes, apprehended in every age by elect souls who, faithful to them and regardless of personal desires, lead the unthinking many to lands of promise. Such a divine leader was Aeneas, such Augustus, such in varying degree every man may be in proportion as he possesses wisdom, patience, superiority to passion, and devotion to duty. Whoever is obedient to a heavenly vision preserves not himself alone but a dependent multitude. The importance of leadership, the acceptance of a divine will in place of personal waywardness, with loyalty to constituted authority, are as truly the themes of Virgil's masterpiece as they are of the Book of Exodus.

Virgil's total work, then, has unity. Its three successive pieces show an orderly progress of thought. The distinctive notes are pitying hope, work, and leadership. These different mental attitudes find appropriate expression in poetry of a lyric, didactic and epic character. No doubt in thus detaching his leading ideas from the body of his work I give them undue emphasis. They are in him rather as directing moods of mind than as a formulated creed. And while Virgil is a scholarly and imitative poet, and has copied his predecessors to a degree unknown before or since, yet no poet, unless the equally scholarly Milton, has left a deeper personal impress upon his work. It is

doubtful too whether there is any parallel to the extent of his influence over subsequent poetry in all its three kinds.

In this volume, however, we meet not Virgil alone, but his skilful interpreter. In the preceding pages I have pieced together from fragmentary notes what I suppose Williams wished said as an introduction to his book. But a grateful reader will desire information about the man himself. I cannot be discharged until I have stated the leading facts of his life and sketched, at least in outline, a character which in its full charm was indescribable.

Theodore Chickering Williams was born in Brookline in 1855. His father, Frederic J. Williams, a civil engineer, was a man of more than usual refinement and range of reading. Williams' own interest in good books was much assisted by the influence of W. C. Collar, the stimulating Headmaster of the Roxbury Latin School, where he prepared for College. The elective system was just starting at Harvard when he entered in 1872, and a rather remarkable group of young men availed themselves of the new freedom to develop their taste for English literature. Williams took high rank among them, attaining membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Society and being chosen Orator for Class Day. Largely dependent on his own exertions for education, after taking his Bachelor's



degree in 1876 he taught in the High School at Keene, N. H., for a year, and then turned to that study of divinity which he had long purposed. He graduated from the Harvard Divinity School as the Orator of his Class in 1882, and the same year was ordained over the Unitarian Church in Winchester, Mass. The following year he married Velma Curtis Wright of Boston and, with many regrets on the part of himself and his church, accepted a call to All Souls Church in New York City, becoming at twenty-eight the successor of Henry F. Bellows. During the thirteen years of his ministry here his profound yet simple preaching and the spiritual quality of the entire man took a strong hold on his church and the community. In 1896 his health became so shaken that he resigned and rested in Europe for two years, taking temporary charge of a church in Oakland, California, the year after his return. His scholarship, his interest in education and his influence over young men had always been so marked that when in 1899 it was proposed to found an important fitting-school for boys at Tarrytown on the Hudson, he was asked to take charge. In five years he built Hackley School from its foundations, acquiring land, constructing its beautiful quadrangle, filling it with students, and establishing such traditions of scholarship, manliness and simplicity as have not been surpassed by the oldest schools in the country. Pupils, teachers and parents joined in admiration and affection for him. But

such work cannot be done without friction and fatigue. In 1905 he again laid down his work and took two years of recuperation in Europe. On returning in 1907 he accepted, though with reluctance, the Head-mastership of his old school, the Roxbury Latin. The agreeable work proved too severe, and in 1909 he was obliged to withdraw and for three years to avoid all continuous occupation. When, however, in 1912 a brother minister in Santa Barbara, California, desired to be relieved of work for a year, Williams took his church and so greatly enjoyed the beauty, hospitality, and intelligence of that land of lotus-eaters that he remained through the following summer. Riding one day among the hills he was overcome by the heat and only after an illness of many months was able to return to Boston. When pneumonia attacked him the following winter, it was evident that his physical resources were at an end. He died on May 6, 1915.

He published a volume of sermons, *Character Building* in 1893, an English verse translation of *Tibullus* in 1905, Virgil's *Aeneid* in 1907, and *Poems of Belief* in 1910. He was Preacher to Harvard University, 1888-90, and poet of the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Society in June, 1904. In 1911 he received the degree of Litt.D., from Western Reserve University. Some twenty of his hymns are scattered in the hymnals of this country and England.

He was of middle height, slight in figure, light-

haired, with mobile, subtle features which imparted to his face an expression like that of Emerson or of Cardinal Newman. His unusual powers of intellectual and moral leadership were early recognized. In a not long and necessarily fragmentary life he accomplished, by aid of a happy home, three remarkable pieces of work. While turning from boyhood to manhood he met the complex demands of a large city church. In middle life there followed the extraordinary success in building, organizing, and inspiring a great school, meeting in it a class of problems with which he had no previous experience. Then in the leisure of advancing age he turns to his life-long companion, Virgil, and through narrative ease, noble diction, and modulated sound, makes him companionable for us too. In all these diverse undertakings the same traits come out. Williams was everywhere thinker, poet, and saint.

His mind played about every subject it touched. The many aspects which truth might assume, its shades, its contradictions even, delighted him. He would suddenly question one of his deepest beliefs and had small regard for formal consistency. Intellectual stagnation was abhorrent to him and impossible for any one in his company. Both thought and utterance were perpetually fresh and highly individual. Yet the texture of his mind was firm and its idealistic convictions seemed strengthened by continual criticism. The casual stranger quickly felt that keen, original, and

scholarly intellect which allowed itself no lazy ambiguities and was ever eager to receive greater reasonableness from others.

This open-mindedness, intellectual refinement, and disposition to create his own modes of speech made poetry, and indeed Fine Art of all sorts, a constant ingredient of his daily life. It never became an artificial pastime. He looked out upon a glad world with the unwearied eyes of a child, seized its human values with rejoicing, sensitively harmonized its discords, and swiftly created appropriate forms for depicting its incidents. He found some good side in everyone, in every experience, remarking in the midst of his last pneumonia that he had never enjoyed an illness so much. His letters were consequently delightful. In his Victorian youth literary interests were dominant, overtopping those of science and commerce. Curiously blended they were too with moral passion. Carlyle, Emerson, Mill, Huxley, Ruskin, were no less great rhetoricians than reformers. The same combination was in Williams. Sound, beautiful, and persuasive language was with him a part of morality, almost of religion, and by daily discipline it had been fashioned into an instinct. While nothing could induce him to his desk if he were not in the mood, at the right moment he would turn off a hymn or Latin epigram while dressing as naturally as a business man plans a commercial deal. Though there was thus in him much of the improvisatore, he loved to polish too, and allowed



nothing to leave his hand till it had reached its utmost perfection. Like all poets, he lived deeply in the present moment; and when it passed, concerned himself little with it and its works. He therefore bore about no burden of regrets, resentments, or fixed limitations, although sometimes depressed with a low estimate of his powers.

All who met him felt his unselfish character and were fascinated by its blending of virility and loveliness. Religion went all through him. He might be said to live with the Eternal and to be ever engaged in tracking its presence through temporal things. While a convinced Unitarian, of a conservative type, he was never misled by "Liberalism" into contempt of other Christians, but felt a humble sympathy with all devout souls. One might well apply to him the abused term "spiritually-minded," only one should then remember his organizing skill, his shrewd judgment of men, and his practical attention to whatever agencies fight poverty, ignorance, and vice. Few so spiritual are also so full of humor, so continually playful. But being thoroughly at home in his Father's house, he found it natural to play there. Whether teaching school, building a church, interpreting Virgil, or sitting as the scintillating center of a group of talkers, he was ever the Christian gentleman, dignified yet charming, and like Pope's "gracious Chandos" was "beloved at sight."

G. H. PALMER.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS,  
September 1, 1915.



# THE GEORGICS



## GEORGIC I

What brings glad harvest-days, what starry sign  
Bids turn the sod for seeding, when to wed  
The elm tree and the vine, what watchful care  
Our cattle ask, the various art and skill  
Good shepherds use, the sage experience  
Which thrifty bees require, — such lowly themes,  
Maecenas, let me here attempt in song.

O universal lights, supremely fair,  
That through the welkin guide the circling year,  
Ye first I call. Then your celestial grace,  
Bacchus and blessèd Ceres, by whose gifts  
Earth changed Chaonia's scanty acorn-crop  
To full-eared, golden corn, and new-trod grape  
Mixed red with Achelous' storied stream.  
Then, helpers kind to husbandmen, ye Fauns, —  
O Fauns with lovely Dryads tripping free! —  
Your works I sing. Thee, too, for whom the Earth  
Flung forth, long ages gone, the prancing horse,  
Smitten by thy tall trident's potent blow,  
O Father Neptune! Then that forester  
Sad Aristaeus, lord of Ceos' isle,  
Whose herd, three hundred snow-white bulls, are fed  
Along its bosky terraces. Then, thou,  
O Pan, the keeper of all flocks! With not less love  
Than for thy sacred Maenalus, dwell here,  
Leaving Lycaean glades and native groves,

To bless thine altars here, Arcadian God.  
Minerva, too, who bade the olive bloom,  
And that boy-deity who first contrived  
The cleaving plough; and Sylvan, carrying  
Th' uprooted, sapling cypress for a sign;  
All gods and goddesses who o'er broad lands  
Hold guard and governance, who give increase  
To strange, wild fruits unsown of mortal hand,  
Or on Man's planting drop the bounteous rain.

Last, though in heavenly conclave what due seat  
Shall be hereafter thine is yet unknown,  
Caesar, on thee I call. Will't guardian be  
Of cities and assume celestial care  
Of every land, while thee the world receives  
For harvest patron and the lord of storms,  
Thy mother's myrtle wreathed about thy brow ?  
Or wilt thou rise upon us as the god  
Of the unmeasured sea, while mariners  
To thee alone make vows, while the world's end  
To thee bows down, and dowered with all her waves  
Tethys, the sea-queen bids thee wed her child ?  
Or wilt thou be a newly stationed sign  
Among the summer stars, in vacant space  
Betwixt the Virgin and the threatening Claws,  
Where, look! the flaming Scorpion for thee  
Already shrinks his grasp, abandoning  
His more than equal portion of the sky ?  
Where'er thou reignest (for it may not be  
That gloomy Tartarus could claim thee king,  
Nor that thine own heart the dread hope should hold

Of such a throne, though Greece with rapture sang  
Elysium's happy fields, and Proserpine  
Heeds not her mother's bidding to return).  
Oh grant me a good voyage! To my bold task  
Nod thy assenting brow, and even as I,  
Pity the farmer-folk, oft at a loss  
What way to choose. Begin thy power divine,  
And wont thee now to heed our vows and prayers.

In earliest Spring when from the mountains white  
The frozen rains dissolve, and zephyr's breath  
Loosens the yielding clod from frosty chain,  
Then and no later, let thy plough drive deep,  
Thy oxen groan, and burnished by its toil,  
Thy gleaming ploughshare from the furrow shine.  
Yet will the careful master's crops reward,  
Though late, his prayers, if fallow lie the land  
Two radiant summers and two winters cold: —  
His barns burst with his endless tale of sheaves.  
But ere our ploughs upturn a field unknown,  
Care must be taken to observe the winds  
And changing skies, what modes and habits be  
The region's heritage, what gift each place  
Bears or denies. These acres favor corn,  
In yonder, vines grow better; elsewhere spring  
Fruit-orchards and a wealth of unsown green.  
Who knows not how the scented saffron grows  
On Tmolus, Lydian hill? that ivory  
Is India's trade, and frankincense the pride  
Of sensual Araby? The Chalybes  
Delve naked after iron, Pontus breeds



The Castor drug, and far Epirus sends  
Her mettled coursers for Olympian palms.  
Such are the laws, the lasting covenants,  
Which Nature's power ordains for place and time,  
Since first Deucalion that primal morn  
Flung stones behind him o'er th' unpeopled world  
Whence men upsprang, — a tribe as hard as stone.  
Therefore, to work! The first months of the year  
Must bid thy strong bulls turn the fruitful ground.  
Let dusty summer with maturing ray  
Bake the flat clod; but if the chosen field  
Be somewhat sterile, it serves well to plough  
Light furrows in the month Arcturus comes,  
Lest, in one case, weeds crowd the healthy corn,  
Or, next, all moisture leave the barren sand.

In odd years, also, let the close-grazed fields  
Lie fallow, while the resting land crusts o'er  
Neglected; or beneath some later star  
Sow golden corn, where once the humble crops  
Were pulse, with shaking, bursting pods, and growth  
Of tiny-seeded vetches, or frail stems  
And whistling patch of lupine, bitter weed!  
For flax will burn the land, so too will oats,  
And poppies with Lethean sleep imbued  
Are crops that burn the heart of any soil.  
The change of crop makes light work. But fear not  
To soak the land with good, rich dung, or strew  
Waste ashes where the wide fields lie outworn.  
Thus with changed harvest give your lands repose,  
For earth unploughed has many a gift in store.



'Tis oft great gain to set bad lands on fire  
And burn the stubble in sharp crackling flame.  
Haply the earth some secret powers conceives  
And seeds of nourishment; or some disease  
Is burned out and all noisome dews expelled;  
Or heat, more like, the hidden breathing-holes  
And secret channels opens and sets free,  
Whereby the young plants drink the moisture in.  
More often heat gives toughness and contracts  
The soil's large veins, lest soaking showers bring harm,  
Or the swift sun's too fierce extreme of power,  
Or wintry blasts of Boreas' piercing cold.  
He also who shall break the sluggish clods  
With rakes, and drag the osier hurdles o'er,  
Prosper his tillage well, and not in vain  
Him golden Ceres from Olympus views.  
Nor him who o'er the once-ploughed land upturns  
Again his ridges, and with oblique share  
Cuts cross-wise; for he trains his land to toil,  
And is true captain of obedient fields.

For summers moist and windless winters fair  
Pray heaven, ye farmer-folk. In winters dry  
The corn rejoices and your acres smile.  
'Tis of this blessing Mysia chiefly boasts,  
Where Gargara wonders at the wealth she bears.  
Why tell of him who when his seed is strewn  
Attacks his field forthwith and smooths away  
The mounds of sterile sand? Soon o'er his crops  
He guides a flood of hastening rivulets;  
For when his acres burn and green things die,

Look! from the forehead of the channelled hill  
He lures the waters down. The tumbling streams  
Wake a hoarse murmur on the polished stones  
And pouring free, relieve the thirsty land.  
Another husbandman, lest wheat-stalks bend  
Beneath the teeming ear, turns in his flock  
To shear the green, too rankly springing, blades  
When first the young shoots top the furrow's side.  
Another from some saturated bog  
Drains off the gathered waters, chiefly when  
The river, after months of changeful sky,  
Swells o'er its banks, filling wide flats with slime,  
And from the swamp-holes steams the heated ooze.

Yet though the toils of men and oxen turn  
A careful furrow through the glebe, not less  
Will bold wild-geese, or Strymon's host of cranes,  
Or bitter-fibred weeds their mischief do,  
Or overgrowth of shade spoil half the corn.  
+ Great Jove himself ordained for husbandry  
No easy road, when first he bade earth's fields  
Produce by art, and gave unto man's mind  
Its whetting by hard care; where Jove is king  
He suffers not encumbering sloth to bide.  
Before Jove reigned no busy husbandmen  
Subdued the ground; there was no usage then  
Of landmarks, lines and severance of the fields;  
All goods were common, and the liberal earth  
Gave every gift unsued. 'Twas Jove bestowed  
Foul poison on dread serpents, bade the wolves  
Be robbers, vexed with troubling waves the sea,

Shook off from leafy oaks their honey-dew,  
Concealed the seeds of fire, and stopped the flow  
Of streaming rills that once ran red with wine.  
He purposed that experience and thought  
By slow degrees should fashion and forge out  
Arts manifold, should seek green blades of corn  
By ploughing, and from veins of flinty shard  
Hammer the fire. Then first the rivers felt  
Skiffs made of hollowed alder. Mariners  
Then told the names and numbers of the stars:  
Hyades, Pleiads, and Lycaon's child,  
The glorious Bear. Then first were forests laid  
With snares for woodland creatures: cunningly  
Men limed the birds, or circled glade and scaur  
With barking pack, or lashed the rivers wide  
With cast of net, or trailed the briny sea  
With dripping lines. Then iron in hot forge  
Took temper and the chill-edged saw was made;  
For driven wedges first were used to cleave  
The yielding grain of wood. Then later times  
Brought forth of other arts the varied skill.  
Work conquered all, relentless, obstinate,  
While poverty and hardship urged it on.  
Ceres of old taught mortal men to delve  
The earth with iron share, what evil time  
The hallowed groves their acorns and wild fruits  
Refused to bear, and from Dodona's tree  
No nurture fell. But soon the growing corn  
Required fresh labor when a mildew foul  
Devoured the stalks, and prickly was the field  
With idle thistles; the good crops were lost

And in their place sprang thorny undergrowth  
Of burrs and caltrops; over beauteous fields  
The witch-grass and vile darnel won the day.  
Wherefore unless with frequent harrowings  
Thou dost compel thy land, and with loud cries  
Scarest the crows away, and prunest close  
All over-darkening branches, and with prayer  
Dost win full rains from heaven, — then, alas!  
Thou shalt in vain behold the bursting barns  
Some neighbor hath, and stay thine appetite  
On forest acorn shaken from the tree.

Now shall be told what weapons in their war  
The sturdy farmers use, without whose aid  
No sowing time or reaping e'er could be,  
No crop could e'er be sown or harvest rise.  
The ploughshare first with heavy-timbered strength  
Of curving handles, then the harvest wains,  
Their slow wheels sacred to Eleusis' queen;  
The threshing-sledges, drags, and clumsy weight  
Of harrows; osier-plaited basketry  
By worshipt Celeus given; the hurdles wound  
With sacred stems; and blest Iacchus' sign,  
The mystic winnowing-fan. These, one and all  
With forward-looking mind for months before  
Provide, if worthy thou would'st always be.  
To claim the glory of the art divine  
Of husbandry. The elm tree in the grove  
While yet a sapling small must be constrained  
By pressure strong to take the curving line  
Of the plough's handle; joined to this the pole

Stretches eight feet in front; there is the pair  
Of earth-boards, and the share-beam fitted well  
With double-timbered back. Cut for the yoke  
A linden light, and from a beech tree tall  
Wood for the staff which at the base controls  
The turning of the plough. Long time each piece  
Should hang in hearth-smoke for good seasoning.

Many the wise old maxims I could tell,  
If patient thou would'st hear, not wearying  
Of sage acquaintance with small tasks and cares.  
This notably, to smooth the threshing-floor  
Break it by hand and roll with large round stone,  
Then face with close-packed clay, lest weeds push through  
Or the worn surface crack; wherewith arrives  
Many a pest to plague thee: such as he  
Of subterranean house and granary,  
The small mouse; or, though prisoned by his eyes,  
The mole digs deep his bed; or lurking toad  
Peers from his hole; and many a prodigy  
The earth unnumbered breeds: the weevil tribes  
Whose legions ravage the high heap of corn,  
And ants, whose fear is age and poverty.

Observe well if the walnut in the grove  
Blossom in mantling flowers and downward bend  
Its fragrant boughs; for if its fruit abound,  
A like corn-crop will follow and a year  
Of generous heat and threshing; but if groves  
Spread forth mere luxury of leafy shade,  
Then wilt thou thresh in vain the chaff-blown straw.



Many I know who ere the beans are sown  
Steep them in nitre and mix lees of oil,  
That in the pods, so oft of promise vain,  
A larger size be found. Yet have I seen  
Seeds chosen patiently and tested long  
And moistened, too, over a gentle fire,  
Spoilt notwithstanding, save if year by year  
One picked the best by hand. It is the law  
Of all things to grow worse and to return  
To lower levels; as when oarsmen drive  
A boat upstream, if once the rowing slack,  
The hurrying river hurls it headlong down.  
Besides, we must of stars as watchful be —  
Arcturus, the bright Serpent, the two Kids, —  
As men bound homeward over stormful seas  
Who venture Hellespont and threatening straits  
Where rich Abydos its famed oyster bears.  
When Libra to the hours of sleep and day  
Gives equal measure and divides the globe  
Betwixt the realms of darkness and of light,  
Then, ploughmen, drive your oxen hard and seed  
The fields with barley, until comes the verge  
Of stormy winter, little apt for toil.

Also the flax and Ceres' garland flowers,  
The poppies, should be sown; and now begin  
With constant harrowing, while the unsoaked soil  
Allows, and yet the rainclouds brood afar.  
In Spring, bean-sowing! and let furrows moist  
Receive the Medic clover; every Spring  
Prepare the millet, when with golden horns

The white Bull opes the year, and in retreat  
The Dog, with star averted, sinks obscure. /  
But if for bearded wheat or sturdy spelt  
Thy land is tilled and only grain is planned,  
Let first the morning Pleiads cease to shine  
And the fierce splendor of the Cretan Crown,  
Ere in the furrows thou shalt cast their due  
Of seeds, and ere to a reluctant soil  
Thou rashly lend the hopes of all the year.  
Many before the Pleiad sets begin,  
But them their long-awaited harvest cheats  
With withered corn. If vetches thou wouldst have  
Or common kidney bean, and scornest not  
Lentils, th' Egyptian sort, the sinking Bear  
Will show no doubtful sign; then start away  
And to mid-winter frosts the work prolong.  
To give this guidance doth the golden Sun  
Govern the heavenly sphere, which sectioned is  
In changeless regions by twelve starry Signs.  
Five zones possess the sky: one dazzling bright  
Glowes ever in the sun and burns with fire;  
Round this to right and leftward lie outspread  
Two zones extreme, with blue ice mantled o'er  
And clouds of gloom. Midway between them lie  
The two which by the grace of gods belong  
To suffering mortals. Through them both a path  
Cuts slantwise, for the highway of the Signs.  
Toward Scythia and the hoar Rhiphaean peaks  
The sphere is lifted high; toward Libya  
Low to the south it bends. The upper pole  
Is ever high above us; the obverse

Is deeper than dark Styx and shades below.  
Around the North the monster Serpent trails  
With coil and curve, and like a river winds  
'Twixt the two Bears — the stars that shrink away  
And shun the watery touch of Ocean's rim.  
At South, a timeless, voiceless night, some say,  
Far spreads in gathered gloom; or truth may be  
Aurora from our realm retires to bring  
Their Morn; and when her panting chariot-steeds  
Breathe here, then Vesper's torch lights there the stars.

'Tis with such knowledge that we can foretell  
From shifting skies the storms to come, and times  
For reaping or for seed, what day to stir  
With stroke of oars the smooth, perfidious sea,  
When fleets should launch them forth in war-array,  
When in the forests to lay low the pine.  
It is no idle watch to mark the Signs  
That set or rise, and how th' impartial year  
In four distinguished, equal seasons flows.  
When a skilled farmer by long winter rains  
Is bound indoors, he finds occasion fair  
For tasks at leisure, which some later day  
Would bid him slight in haste, if skies were clear.  
The ploughman hammers keen the point  
Of the worn share, he scoops out trees for troughs,  
Or brands his herd, or on full sacks of corn  
Smears numbers; others whittle out sharp stakes,  
Or forked props, or for the rambling vines  
Twine withes of willow; others plait by hand  
Light baskets of the stems of hillside thorn;



Now parch the corn on embers and then grind  
Upon a well-smoothed stone. For even on days  
Of hallowed festival it is no wrong  
Some fitting task to ply. No law divine  
Hinders to trench and drain, or hedge about  
A ripening harvest, or set snares for birds,  
Or burn out brambles, or in healthful stream  
To bathe the bleating flock; 'tis on such days  
The driver loads his slow-paced donkey's ribs  
With oil and low-priced apples, then plods home  
Fetching from city forum a cut stone  
Or large black lump of pitch.

The moon herself

Ordains the days which for their fitting tasks  
Are omened well. The fifth day bodes great ill:  
For death-pale Orcus and the Eumenides  
On this were born, and Earth's prodigious womb  
With throes accurst brought forth Iapetus,  
Coeus and grim Typhoeus, the fell brood  
Who plotted to tear down the sky, and thrice  
Strove to plant Ossa upon Pelion's crown,  
And on them forest-clad Olympus fling,  
But thrice Jove's bolt the heaped-up hills o'erthrew.  
The seventeenth brings luck in planting vines,  
Roping and training bulls, and starting webs  
Upon the loom; the ninth gives good escapes  
And thwarts the thief.

Yet night's chill hours are best

For many a task, or when with orient beam  
The morn bedews the pastures. Then men crop  
Light stubble, and at night mow fields burnt dry:

For soft night-moisture then but seldom fails.  
Some watch late hours by blazing winter hearth  
And with keen blade point torches, while the wife,  
Consoling her long toil with cheerful song,  
Through loom and web her shrill-voiced shuttle moves,  
Or boils sweet must above a roaring fire,  
And skims with leaves the cauldron's bubbling tide.

But 'tis the full midsummer when ripe corn  
Is ready for the sickle; at hot noon  
Bruise on the threshing-floor the arid grain.  
Plough naked and sow naked. Winter days  
Should bring the farmer ease; the country folk  
When the cold strengthens use their garnered store  
In welcome feasts and hospitable cheer,  
While merry winter spreads the board and breaks  
The bonds of care; as when full-laden ships  
Come to safe port at last, and on their prows  
The happy mariners wind wreaths of flowers.  
Yet now is time to pluck from oaken bough  
Its acorns, and the laurel's bitter fruit,  
With bay and, red as blood, the myrtle berries.  
Now snare the crane, lay nets for antlered stags,  
Chase long-eared hares. Now may Balearic archers  
Strike the shy does, whirling their sling in air  
By its hemp cord, while now the snow lies deep  
And streams compact their ice.

What now to tell  
Of autumn's tempests and her starry signs?  
When now the days grow short and suns more mild,  
What anxious watch men keep! Or when the Spring

Departs with showery skies, and in the fields  
The pointed blades flaunt forth, and budding corn  
Thrusts itself full-sapped from the fresh, green stem!  
Oft have I seen (just when the husbandman  
Was sending to the yellow harvest fields  
His band of reapers, binding the frail stalks  
In sheaves) a war of winds rush down and smite  
The full corn far and wide, and from the roots  
Uptearing, toss it high, as wintry storms  
Dark whirling, sweep up stubble and light straw.  
Oft out of heaven a boundless multitude  
Of waters bursts, and gathering from the sea  
The clouds roll up black rains and tempests dire.  
Down crashes the whole sky, and floods of rain  
Drown the fair fields and all the oxen's toil.  
The trenches overflow, the channelled streams  
Swell with a roar, and all the sea is stirred  
With waves untamable. Then Jupiter  
From midnight dark of thunder-cloud throws forth  
With his own hand his blinding bolt divine.  
The vast earth shudders at the shock, the beasts  
Are fled to cover, and in haunts of men  
Great cowering fear all mortal hearts confounds.  
The god could thus with blazing shaft o'erwhelm  
Athos and Rhodope, and hurl to dust  
The proud Ceraunian peaks. With doubling roar  
The tempest blows and heavier pours the rain,  
While with wild blasts the woods and shores make moan.

In fear of such, watch how the starry skies  
Change with the monthly signs; what winding course

Saturn's cold planet takes, and 'mid what spheres  
Strays Mercury's red fire. But chiefly pay  
Fit worship to the gods. Make sacrifice  
Each year to sovereign Ceres, when the grass  
Is green and glad, the winter making end  
And gentle Spring is in the air, when lambs  
Are fattening, when the wine grows smooth and mild,  
And sweet is slumber in cool hillside shade.  
Let all the country youth of manly prime  
On Ceres call, bearing her tribute due  
Of honey mixed with milk and sweet, new wine.  
Three times around the freshly bladed corn  
The blessed victim guide, while all the choir  
In gladsome company an anthem sing,  
Bidding the goddess to their lowly doors.  
And let no reaper touch the ripened corn  
With sickle keen until his brows he bind  
With twine of oak-leaf, while he trips along  
In artless dance with songs in Ceres' praise.

✓ 'Twas Jove's own grace decreed that by sure signs  
Men prophesy of droughts, rains, frost and winds,  
Watching the admonitions of the moon,  
Marking what bodes 'a gale, what oft-seen signs  
Bid herdsmen keep their cattle nigh the barn.  
When storms are rising, the wide ocean's flood  
Begins to toss and roll; on wooded hills  
Tumultuous crash is heard; from every side  
The mountain lakes re-echo; vaster swells  
The forest's moaning; now the smiting seas  
Scarce spare the ship's round side; the sea-gulls wing

From mid-sea swiftly home and fill the shore  
With clamorous voice; while safe upon the beach  
The brown coots play; the heron makes escape  
From green salt fens, her haunt, and cloudward soars.  
Oft when a tempest threatens, you shall see  
The very stars drop headlong from the sky  
And trail through night's deep gloom a glittering flame.  
Oft through the air flit straws and fallen leaves,  
And floating feathers dance along the stream.  
But when the wild North region flashes, while  
Both East and West are thundering, soon the land  
Is flooded with full streams, and out at sea  
Wise mariners haul close the dripping sail.

Never unheralded descends the storm;  
For while 'tis brewing, cranes of lofty wing  
Retreat to lowland vales; the heifer scans  
The sky above and snuffs the passing breeze  
With nostrils wide; the swallow with shrill cry  
Flits round the pond, and from the marish ooze  
The frogs in choir their age-long trouble sing;  
Often the ant from out her secret cells  
Bores her strait path and brings her eggs to air;  
A spacious rainbow drinks the rain; the crows  
Their camp abandon and in martial line  
Depart, with clashing of unnumbered wings;  
Sea-birds of many a tribe, that haunt the fens  
Of Asia and Caÿster's waters fair,  
Eagerly splash their backs with showers of spray,  
Dive head down in the stream, and race along  
The rippling surface, while unrestingly



They plunge with fury in the needless bath.  
With lifted voice the loud insulting crow  
Invokes the rain, and o'er some sandy marge  
Circles alone. Then if the maidens ply  
Their looms at night, they know the tempest nigh,  
As in the lamp's clay bowl the burning oil  
Flickers and all the wick is wet with mould.

Likewise by tokens sure thou mayst foretell  
Clear sunshine after rain and days of calm:  
For the stars seem with undimmed ray to shine,  
And the bright moon as if she need not steal  
Her brother's beam, nor longer through the skies  
Drifts the light gossamer of fleecy clouds;  
Nor does the halcyon sunward spread her wings  
Along the sea-marge, bird to Thetis dear;  
Nor do the filthy swine their sheaves of straw  
Bite, but they toss them fiercely round the pen.  
The misty clouds creep downward to the vales  
And linger on the meadows; the night-owl  
Watching from house-tops how the sun goes down  
Now sings in vain her ominous even-song;  
Aloft in cloudless air the osprey soars, —  
Nisus he was, and Scylla feels her doom  
For faithless theft of that one purple hair;  
And where her wings escaping cleave the blue,  
Lo, with a mighty whirr of wings her foe  
Nisus, air-borne, pursues; where Nisus rides  
Upon the wind, there too must Scylla fly  
And cleave with panic wing the vacant blue.  
Then with clear note and eager-throated voice

The crows three times and four repeat their cry,  
And often in their airy dwellings feel  
A strange new stir of joy, and hid in leaves  
Make clamorous talk; they love when storms are done  
To tend the small broods and dear nests once more.  
It is not, as I think, some inborn power  
Made theirs by gift divine, nor foresight true  
By natural law bestowed; but when the shift  
Of weather comes, and all the flowing skies  
Their courses alter, and the laden air  
Drenched with the southwinds turns from thick to thin  
And thin to thick, — then all the creatures' minds  
New images receive and in their breasts  
Are other thoughts than when the storm-winds blew.  
So in the fields the birds consenting sing,  
The flocks are glad, the crows in triumph cry.

✕ If wisely you shall watch the swift-wheeled sun  
And moon in ordered change, no morrow morn  
Will disappoint, nor eve of flattering calm  
Betray and snare. When the first crescent moon,  
Now reassembling her resurgent fires,  
Clasps a dark mist betwixt her shadowed horns,  
Then for the farmer-folk and out at sea  
Vast storm is brewing; but if maiden blush  
O'erspread her face, then wind; the golden moon  
Glows red in wind; but if — the surest sign —  
She shines clear the fourth night and travels heaven  
With undiminished horns, then all that day,  
And all succeeding till the month is done,  
Will bring nor rain nor wind: and safe on shore


The sailors sing with Panopaea's praise  
Glaucus and Melicertes, Ino's child.

Also the sun both with his rising beams  
And when in western wave his front he hides,  
Gives many a token. Signs infallible  
Attend the sun. He shows them in the skies  
At morn and when the rising stars appear.  
When his dim dawn a spotted mantle wears  
And he, cloud-wrapt, the half his orb withdraws,  
Then look for showers: for then the southern storm,  
Of forest, flock, and field the wrathful foe,  
Is speeding from the deep. Or when at dawn  
Sparse beams pierce heavy clouds, and pale of brow  
Aurora from Tithonus' saffron bed  
Shall take her flight, — ah, then the tendrilled vine  
For mellowing grapes will sorry shelter prove,  
While rattling thick upon the roof down pours  
The dancing hail. But also when the sun  
Is setting and his heavenly course is spanned,  
Then more than ever mark his aspect well.  
For oft we see strange shifts of color stray  
Along his face: the azure heralds rain,  
Flame-hued, strong wind. But if red flashes glow  
With mingling spots, then will you soon behold  
A heaven-wide tumult of dark clouds and storms.  
On such a night let none my ship compel  
On the deep seas to ride, nor from safe shore  
Her cable sever. \ But if his orb shall shine  
Undimmed, both when he gives the glorious day  
Or his own gift beneath the world conceals,

Then vain your fear of storms, and you shall see  
Your waving woods by cloudless north-winds move.  
Lastly, what morn the closing eve portends,  
What winds bring rainless clouds, what coming harm  
The misty southwind means, of these and more  
The sun will show the signs.

What mortal dares  
Doubt the sun's speaking true? Is it not he  
That warns full oft when dark seditions lour,  
Treasons and swelling tides of secret war?  
He pitied Rome when Caesar fell, and long  
In clouds of iron gloom his forehead veiled,  
Till this bad age feared night could have no end.  
Yea, in those times the earth, the spreading seas,  
Abominable dogs and birds accursed,  
Gave portents terrible. Day after day  
From bursting furnace-caverns Aetna poured  
Vast, seething floods along the Cyclops' land,  
With balls of flame and rocks in molten flow.  
A clash of arms that filled the arching skies  
Germania heard. The Alpine summits shook  
With shuddering strange. Through silent groves divine  
A mighty cry smote many a listening ear,  
And phantoms wondrous pale were seen to move  
Along the shades of night. The lowing herds  
Spoke language—fearful sign! The flowing streams  
Stood still, earth opened, and in temple shrines  
The bronze and ivory shed sorrow's tears,  
Eridanus, the king of streams, engulfed  
Whole groves in raging waves, and through wide vales  
Bore flock and fold away. In those dark days

The victim's entrails never ceased to show  
Some evil-boding sign. The very wells  
Ran blood; the cities all night long  
Were loud with howling wolves; never till then  
So many thunderbolts from cloudless skies,  
So many frightful comets flamed afar.  
Because of these Philippi viewed once more,  
Each against each, in clash of equal arms,  
The ranks of Romans ride; nor did high heaven  
Forbid that twice the blood of Romans spilled  
Enriched the pastures of Emathia  
And all wide plains from Haemus' top o'erviewed.  
The day shall come, I ween, when in that land  
Some farmer, driving deep his curving share,  
Shall find rust-eaten javelins half-consumed,  
Or with his heavy harrow smite upon  
Helmets, all empty, and with wonder scan  
Gigantic bones in opened grave laid bare.  
Gods of our fathers, and protecting powers  
That watch our native land, O Romulus,  
O Vesta, sacred mother, who dost guard  
Our Tuscan Tiber and Rome's Palatine,  
Fail not to grant that our young Prince restore  
The ruined world. Too long our blood is poured  
To wash away the sinful perjury  
Of King Laomedon. Already Heaven,  
Th' Olympian dwelling, envies us for thee,  
O Caesar, and complains thou still dost choose  
Triumphs on earth; for here both right and wrong  
Lie mingled and o'erthrown. So many wars  
Vex the whole world, so many monstrous shapes





Of wickedness appear; no honor due  
Is given the sacred plough; our fields and farms,  
Their masters taken, rankly lie untilled;  
Our pruning-hooks are beaten in hot flames  
To tempered swords. Euphrates yonder stirs,  
There wild Germania, to impious war;  
Close-neighbored cities their firm leagues forswear  
And rush to arms. The War-god pitiless  
Moves wrathful through the world. With not less rage  
Swift chariot-horses through the circus bound  
With ever-quickenning pace; the driver pale  
Is vanquished by his team and waves on high  
His helpless reins; no curb the chariot heeds.

## GEORGIC II

The arts of husbandry, the stars of heaven,  
Thus far have filled my song; but, Bacchus, now  
Of thee I sing, of many a greenwood tree,  
And of the slow-grown olive's offspring fair.  
Draw nigh, O Sire Lenaeus! thy good gifts  
On every side abound; the teeming land  
Blooms with autumnal vines, the foaming vats  
Run o'er with vintage. O Lenaeus, come,  
Here at our wine-press cast thy buskins by,  
And stain with purple grape thine ankles bare.

Mark at the outset in what differing wise  
Trees left to Nature propagate their kind.  
For some, not urged of man, spread far and wide  
At their own will, along the open plains  
Or winding rivers; thus the osiers grow,  
The pliant broom-plant, the tall poplar's stem,  
And smooth green willows silvering in the wind.  
But others from sown seed begin; as groves  
Of lofty chestnut, and Jove's chosen leaf,  
Sweet acorn, or that oak, whose vocal bough  
Seemed to the listening Greeks an oracle.  
Others of scions densely clustering grow,  
As cherry and elm; Parnassian laurel, too,  
Lifts in large mother-shade its infant stem.  
These three are Nature's ways; such bourgeoning

The shrubs, the copses have, and templed groves.  
But art and custom other means contrive:  
One cuts his slips from out the yielding womb  
Of mother tree, and in his trenches sets;  
One buries stocks in earth, as quartered stakes  
Or pointed poles; some trees need slips bent back  
Bow-shaped, which take root in their native soil;  
Some need no root at all; the pruner's blade  
Cuts the tree's crest and plants it in the ground.  
Even small sections serve, and, strange to tell!  
Out of bare blocks will burst the olive green.  
Often we watch one tree put forth unharmed  
Branches of differing kind: a pear-tree grows  
Engrafted apples, and tough cornels wild  
Redden with plums.

Therefore, O husbandmen,  
Be diligent to learn the culture due  
Each separate kind, and soften by your skill  
The wilding fruit's harsh, native quality.  
No land need idle be. Steep Ismara  
Blooms well with Bacchus' gift, and olives fair  
Mantle Taburnus' mighty sides with green.

But bless me, thou, and course with me this voyage,  
My glory, my Maecenas, thou chief part  
Of all my fame, spread sail on this wide sea!  
Yet shall my song not all its world explore,  
Nor could it if a hundred tongues were mine,  
A hundred mouths and voice of iron. Grant  
Thy favor for a voyage by neighboring shores,  
Ever in reach of land. Nor will I here

Detain thine ear with false laborious song  
Through twisted preludes winding without end.

Wild trees that of their native vigor rise  
Into the realms of day, are scant of fruit  
But sound and strong, — the soil such virtue hides.  
Yet if engrafted or in trenches set,  
Are changed and put their sylvan nature by,  
Till to what modes and forms your busy art  
Persuades them, they with slight resistance yield.  
Even the leafless stems which the tree's roots  
Put forth do likewise, if in open field  
Replanted; for the branching foliage  
Of mother-tree o'ershades and blights the fruit  
Before it buds, or withers it when blown.  
Trees grown from seed have slow maturity  
And unto children's children give their shade.  
Their fruit is tasteless and degenerate;  
The wild vine's grape to robber birds is given.  
For all, I ween, must labors hard and slow  
Be measured out; all must in trench and row  
Be disciplined and at large cost subdued.  
The olive-trees from leafless truncheons spring,  
Vines out of layers, and from solid wood  
The Paphian myrtle. Hardy hazels start  
From suckers; this way too the mighty ash,  
And poplar, leafy crown of Hercules,  
And acorns of Chaonian Jove; thus too  
The soaring palm is born, and mountain fir,  
Erewhile to tempt the hazards of the sea.  
But when engrafted, the tough arbuté springs

From walnut stock, the barren plane-tree bears  
Excellent apples, chestnuts change to beech,  
The mountain ash turns white with blossoming pear,  
And swine crunch acorns under elm-tree shade.

Nor is there one sole way to graft and bud:  
For where young eyes from the tree's bark swell forth,  
Bursting their tender sheaths, a slit is made  
Just at the knot; and here they fasten in  
The shoot from stranger tree, and bid it thrive  
In the moist sapwood. Or smooth trunks are gashed,  
And wedges through the solid timber driven,  
Then fruit-tree scions set: in no long time  
The tall tree skyward lifts its laden boughs  
And sees with wonder what strange leaves it bears  
And fruitage not its own.

Not all one kind

Are strong elms, willows, or the cypress glooms  
Of Ida, or the lotos trees; not one  
Are the rich olives, spindle-shaped, or round,  
Or bitter-oiled; all sorts of apples fine  
And many a fruit Alcinous' orchards bear.  
So the Crustumians, the bergamots,  
And big pound-pears come not upon one stem.  
Nor is the vintage of our native vine  
Like grape of Lesbos in Methymna grown.  
The Thasian wines we know and white Egyptian,  
One from fat soil and one from sandy sprung.  
Psithian is raisin-wine, and Lageos  
Will soon betray thy feet and stop thy tongue.  
Purples and early-ripes there are, — but what



Of wine Cisalpine? Few would call it peer  
Of the Falernian cask. The Aminaean  
Are wines of body and outranking far  
Both Lydian mount and Chian promontory.  
The lesser Argite grape surpasses all  
In plenteous juice and quality that lasts  
Year after year. The wine of Rhodes I sing,  
Good for libation and the banquet's end,  
And thee, Bumastus, — how thy clusters swell!  
But of the multitude of names and kinds  
There is no reckoning and all numbers fail.  
Let him attempt it who would guess the sands  
Whirled by swift blasts along the Libyan wild,  
Or number, when the galleys meet great gales,  
The surge of waves along Ionian shores.  
But all lands have not power all gifts to bear:  
Willows spring up by streams, and alders thrive  
In bogs and mire; but high on rock-strewn hills  
The wild ash grows; the shores of lake or sea  
Have groves of myrtle; while on sunny slopes  
The wine-god smiles, and yews love wind and cold.

See how the world's remotest bound is tilled  
By far-off husbandmen: the Arabs dwell  
Where morn first breaks, and in cold Scythia rove  
Tattooed Geloni. Trees are likewise born  
In separate fatherlands: black ebony  
Is India's boast alone, the incense-tree  
Breathes but in Araby. What need to name  
That wood which oozes balsam, or the fruit  
Of evergreen acanthus? or the groves

Of Aethiopia whitened with soft wool ?  
Or silken Seres and their skill to comb  
Translucent fleeces from the leaves of trees  
Which ocean-bordering India bears, which seems  
Earth's last retreat ? For no far-soaring flight  
Of arrows e'er can pass that forest's crown,  
Though bowmen mighty are, the people's pride.  
Media the healthful citron bears, its juice  
Bitter, but lingering long upon the tongue.  
Than which none better (if some step-dame fell  
Have mixed her simples, singing fearful charms)  
To bring swift help and mightily expel  
The secret venom from her victim's bones.  
Tall and like laurel is this citron tree,  
And but for the far-wafted strange perfume,  
Laurel 'twould be; no wind can loose its leaf;  
The blossoms, too, cling fast. With this the Medes  
Sweeten their bad breath, and with this they cure  
An old man's rheums.

✓ But neither flowering groves  
Of Media's rich realm, nor Ganges proud,  
Nor Lydian fountains flowing thick with gold,  
Can match their glories with Italia;  
Not Bactria nor Ind, nor all the wealth  
Of wide Arabia's incense-bearing sands.  
This land by Jason's bulls with breath of flame  
Never was ploughed, nor planted with the teeth  
Of monstrous dragon, nor that harvest grew  
Of helmèd warrior-heads and myriad spears.  
But full-eared corn and goodly Massic wine  
Inhabit here, with olives and fat herds.

The war-horse here with forehead high in air  
Strides o'er the plain; here roam thy spotless flocks,  
Clitumnus; and for noblest sacrifice,  
The snow-white bull, bathed oft in sacred stream,  
Leads Roman triumphs to the house of Jove.  
Here Spring is endless and the Summer glows  
In months not half her own. Twice in the year  
The herds drop young, and twice the orchard bears  
The labor of its fruit. But tigers fell  
And the fierce lion's brood are absent here.  
No deadly aconite deceives the hand  
That gathers herbs; nor in enormous folds  
Or lengthened twine the scaly snake upcoils.  
Behold the famous cities — what vast toil  
Upreared them! — and the host of strongholds piled  
By hand of man on out-hewn precipice,  
While swift streams under ancient bulwarks flow.  
Why tell of two salt seas that wash her shore  
Above, below; her multitude of lakes, —  
Thee, Larius, chiefest, and Benacus where  
Are swelling floods and billows like the sea?  
Why name that haven where the lofty mole  
Locks in the Lucrine lake, while with loud rage  
The baffled waters roar, and Julian waves  
Echo from far the sea's retreating tide,  
And through the channels of Avernus pours  
Th' invading Tuscan main? In this rich land  
Deep veins of silver show, and ores for brass,  
With lavish gold. Hence sprang the warlike breed  
Of Marsi, hence the proud Sabellian clans,  
Ligurians to hardship seasoned well,

And Volscian spearmen; hence the Decii,  
Camilli, Marii, immortal names,  
The Scipios, in wars implacable,  
And Caesar, thou, the last, the prince of all,  
Who now victorious on far Asia's end,  
Art holding back from Roman citadels  
The Indian weakling. Hail, O Saturn's land,  
Mother of all good fruits and harvests fair,  
Mother of men! I for thy noble sake  
Attempt these old and famous themes and dare  
Unseal an age-long venerated spring  
And uplift Hesiod's song o'er Roman towers.

Now for the soils and of their native powers:  
First, the bad lands, the hills ungenerous,  
With spongy marl and gravel and thick thorns,  
Can bloom with clusters unto Pallas dear  
Of long-enduring olive; such are known  
If on the same field oleasters throng,  
And scatter on the ground their sylvan fruit.  
But where rich mould is, moist and prosperous,  
With much green herb — a field of fertile breast,  
Such as from some cool, hollow mountain-glen  
We oft look o'er, where tall cliffs from above  
Small streams drop down and bring their gift of loam,  
A southward slope, and bearing crops of fern,  
That pest of ploughmen, — such a land some day  
Will bear sound vines and grapes of plenteous juice;  
Many its clusters, and in Bacchus' praise  
'Twill give such wine as pours from cups of gold  
When on his ivory flute, the altars nigh,

The full-cheeked Tuscan blows, and on curved trays  
We bear the smoking entrails to the god.  
But if with kine and calves thy business be,  
Or new-born lambs, or garden-spoiling goats,  
Seek prosperous Tarentum's distant glens,  
Or pastures such as ill-starred Mantua lost,  
Where swans snow-white in green-sedged waters feed.  
There shall thy flocks find many a fountain free  
And grass unfailing; for what each long day  
Thy creatures take, the short night's cooling dew  
Restore in full.

Earth that is almost black,  
Rich when upturned, a loose and crumbling soil,  
Such as ploughs make by art, for all grain-crops  
Is fittest; from no other wide-spread mead  
So many loaded wains at eve are drawn  
By slow-paced oxen home. Or choose some field  
From which erewhile the farmer, frowning hard,  
Dragged off the forest and destroyed a grove  
So long unprofitable, — every root  
He takes, and lofty tops, the dwelling-place  
Of birds year after year, who quit their nests  
And skyward soar; yet soon the boorish land  
By ploughshare furrowed, comes out dressed and fine.  
But hillocks of dry gravel scarcely yield  
Wild cassias for thy bees and rosemary.  
A scaling tufa, or loose chalk with holes  
By black snakes eaten in, — no lands like these  
For winding lairs of serpents and their food.  
But if the downs exhale white mist at morn  
With shifting vapors and take in at will



Moist air or breathe it forth, and ever wear  
Their own fresh, grassy mantle, yet not stain  
With salty scales of rust the plough's bright blade,  
Such land will wreath the elm with fruitful vines;  
Plenteous in olives too; the farmer's toil  
Finds it to herds a friend and to his plough  
Obedient. Such land rich Capua tills;  
Such the Vesuvian slopes, where Clanius flows,  
Acerrae's waster and unpitying foe.

I now set forth what way each kind of soil  
Can be distinguished. Would you test  
Its lightness or unwonted heaviness —  
Since one for corn is apter, one for wine,  
Heavy for Ceres, for the Wine-god, light, —  
Seek out a likely spot, and bid them sink  
A deep pit in the ground; then shovel back  
All the earth taken and stamp down the top  
Till level; if the mass fall short, the soil  
Is light, and fertile for flock-pasturing  
Or plenteous vines; but if the earth refuse  
To go back whence it came, the soil is thick;  
Look for rebellious clods and furrow it  
With sturdy oxen. Then some land is salt  
And bitter, so they say, for fruits unfit,  
Ungentle to the plough, where Bacchus' grapes  
Degenerate, and choice apples lose their praise.  
Test it as follows: take down willow crates  
From smoky roof-tree, or the strainers hung  
From wine-press beam, and in them thrust this soil  
Mixed with some clear spring-water, and stamp down

Till all the water be forced out, and drops —  
Large, round ones — through the baskets run.  
The savor will be proof, if those who taste  
Pucker their faces at its bitterness.  
Next, a rich soil is known by one sure sign:  
It never breaks when tossed from palm to palm  
But clings to the smeared fingers like soft pitch.  
A wet land grows rank weeds, but is in fact  
Too fertile; let not mine o'er-generous be,  
Nor give my corn's first blades excess of power.  
To tell what soil is heavy, what is light,  
The mere weight shows. And one can judge by sight  
Whether too black, or of what hue so-e'er.  
But to detect if that curst chill it hides  
Is very hard, — tough pines and baneful yews  
Or rambling ivies dark are oft a sign.

But all this noted, take industrious care  
To let the land be long time dried in the sun.  
Carve the hills deep with trenches, and long time  
Before you plant the joyful vine, expose  
The upturned clod where blow the northern winds.  
Fields of loose earth are best; winds, chilling frosts,  
And sturdy digging of the broken field,  
Will make it such.

Some men who spare no pains  
Find two like fields: in one young shoots of trees  
Are set, but to the other carried soon,  
Lest the new slips their change of home refuse.  
Some even write the quarters of the sky  
Upon the bark, that as the tree faced first

It may remain — one side to sultry south,  
The other to the pole. So loth to change  
Are a young creature's ways.

But first inquire  
Whether on hills or plain to set thy vines.  
If rich and level be the land you choose,  
Plant close, for vines give no less plenteous yield  
When close; but for a mounded land or hills  
Steep sloping, set in fair and ordered lines,  
Planting the vines with measure scrupulous,  
Till each long path with every crossing squares.  
Thus oft the long-drawn legion's bulk deploys  
Its cohorts for vast war, and all the line  
Stands visibly afield with marshalled front,  
While far and wide the land in waves of light  
Is glittering with steel; not yet  
Begins the grim strife; 'twixt the hosts in arms  
The War-god dubious of the issue strays.

So must the vineyard have its spaces laid  
In measures just, not only to rejoice  
Some idle gazer's mind, but that this way  
The earth lends equal shares of life to all,  
And with free room the branching shoots extend.  
You ask, perhaps, what depth of trench is best.  
The vines in mere light furrow, as I think,  
'Tis safe to plant; but deeper in the ground  
Far down make fast the tree, and most of all  
The oak, which far as toward th' ethereal sky  
Its crest uprears, so far to space below  
Sends forth the roots to Tartarus; no winds,

No shock of wintry gale nor drenching storm  
O'erwhelm its power; unvanquished it abides  
Even to children's children, and outlives  
In vigorous age full many a mortal span;  
Reaching its boughs far round like giant's arms,  
It bears with bulk unpropped its burdening shade.  
Face not your vineyards to the setting sun.  
Suffer no hazels planted there, nor prune  
The end-stalks, nor from very tree-top take  
Your cuttings, for plants love to live near earth;  
Nor clip young budding stems with knife not keen;  
Nor let wild-olive poles be used; for oft  
From careless shepherds a chance spark will fall,  
Which first hides smouldering in the oily bark,  
Keeping the solid wood; soon unconfined  
It gets the leaves above and fills the air  
With roarings loud; then on from bough to bough  
Pursues, till to the loftiest crests its power  
Triumphant spreads, o'ermantles all the grove  
With glare of flames, drives heavenward a cloud  
Thick and pitch-black; and if by chance should fall  
A sweep of storm, o'erbrooding all the hills,  
Its blast drives on the swelling fires. No more  
Can vines thereafter grow, not even their roots,  
Nor pruning close draw greenness from that ground,  
Only the bitter-leaved wild olive lives.

But let no counsellor, though ne'er so sage,  
Bid you the crusted field disturb when blows  
The wind of Boreas, and cold winter seals  
The land with frost, nor lets the scattered seeds

Or stiffened roots make dwelling in the ground.  
Set vines at seed-time, when the blush of Spring  
Brings back the stork, of long, black snakes the foe;  
Or at first autumn coolness, when the sun  
Has driven his steeds not yet to winter's bound,  
Though summer is no more. But, sooth, 'tis Spring  
Lends leafing orchard and the woodside green  
Her help and succor; in the Spring the earth  
Swells warm and bids the seeds of life begin.  
Then will th' almighty Sire from heights of air  
Descend in life-engendering showers to fill  
Earth's bosom, his glad spouse, and mightily  
With her vast body mingling, brings to power  
All unborn things she bears. With song-birds then  
The tangled brakes are loud, and lowing herds —  
Their season due — live o'er their mating days.  
The whole earth's womb is travailing; the land  
Spreads bare its bosom to the warm west wind,  
And gentle dews feed all. The bladed grass  
Climbs boldly upward to the sun's young beams;  
The tendrilled vine shrinks not from gathering storm  
Nor rout of wind-swept northern rains, but thrusts  
Her soft buds forth and every leaf unfolds.  
Such were the days, I could believe, that glowed  
When earth her growth began, — such even course  
That season kept; all winds from east and north  
Forebore their wintry blasts; the first flocks then  
Drank in the radiant air; with lifted head  
Man's iron breed from stone-strewn fields arose;  
Beasts through the woods and stars through heaven  
went forth.



For new-born, tender things had ne'er endured  
Life's labor, but that 'twixt too hot or cold  
This time of quiet interposing stays,  
And earth 'neath heaven's indulgence rests and smiles.

But to proceed: o'er young vines set afield  
Scatter rich stores of dung, and carefully  
Heap high with earth; or spade in porous stones  
Or rough, old shells, that streams of trickling rain  
May through them glide, or light-blown mists steal down.  
Thus all the plants will thrive. Some husbandmen  
Press flat stones over them and heavy mass  
Of potsherds, — bulwark against beating showers,  
Or when the sultry Dog Star splits the field  
In thirsty cracks. Next, after planting thus,  
Do much loose raking, even to the roots,  
Or sometimes stir the soil by ploughing deep,  
Guiding the trampling cattle's feet with care  
Between the rows of vines. Then choose smooth reeds  
And peelèd wands, like spears, and ashwood poles,  
And stakes two-pronged, by which each shelf of vine  
May have strong props and heed no wind that blows,  
But climb from bough to bough up the tall elm.  
While the young vine is leafing its first green,  
Be to its softness kind. While the gay sprout  
Gads in the breeze and skyward leaps uncurbed,  
Attempt no pruning yet with sickle keen,  
But with your thumb and finger pluck the leaves,  
Selecting wisely. Later when the stems,  
Grown stalwart, clasp the elms in close embrace,  
Then dress their locks and shear the branches well.

Ere this the knife but mars, yet now is time  
To leash in strict control the straggling boughs.

Make wattled hedges, too, to hold away  
Creatures of every kind, and most of all  
While yet the soft crest fears no coming harm.  
For worse than winters wild or scorching suns  
Is when huge buffaloes or raiding goats  
Run crowding in, or sheep seek pasture there,  
Or greedy cows. No cold, nor heavy cloak  
Of silver frost, nor even the smiting rays  
From rocks burnt dry, harm vines as such beasts do,  
Whose merciless, foul teeth make lasting scars.  
For this sole crime, where Bacchus' altars rise,  
The goat is ever victim: o'er the stage  
Strut the quaint mimes at revel; Theseus' sons  
At cross-road meeting place or hamlet gay  
Garland the winning wits, then from full cups  
Rise flushed and jolly, and on green-sward fair  
Dance among wine-skins. Even so,  
Ausonia's husbandmen, the breed of Troy,  
Make careless verse and mocking laughter loud,  
And direful masks of hollowed bark put on.  
Then jubilant songs, O Bacchus, shout thy name,  
And from some lofty pine thine emblems swing.  
Now every vineyard with large clusters ripe  
Is bursting, every rounded vale runs o'er,  
And deep hill-gorges, if the Wine-god there  
His worship'd head have shown. Therefore we sing  
With fitting rites the praise to Bacchus due,  
Carol old songs and march with bread and bowl

Where led up horn-wise to our altar green  
The goat awaits his offering; erewhile  
On rods of hazel the fat caul we turn.

Yet for the laborers in the vineyard waits  
A further toil, of which there is no end.  
For yearly the whole field must furrowed be  
Thrice and again, and everlastingly  
The clods be broke with mattock deeply driven,  
And all the planting clean-stripped of its leaves.  
The labors of the husbandmen return  
In cycles sent, as th' heaven-encircling year  
Doth its old paths pass o'er. For even when  
The vineyard its last leaf has lost, and cold  
Winds of the north fling off the forest's crown,  
The farmer even then prolongs his toils  
Into the opening year, and with curved edge  
Of Saturn's sickle shearing, pruning still,  
Pursues his naked vine and shapes it round.  
Be earliest, I counsel, to dig o'er  
Your field, be first to burn the boughs  
You bear away in bundles, and to bring  
The poles and props safe home; but be the last  
To gather harvest in. Vines put forth shade  
Excessive twice a year, and twice thick thorns  
And tares would choke their yield; 'gainst either ill  
Hard task it is to strive. Therefore admire  
Wide-spreading acres; let your own be few.

Besides, in woodlands prickly stems of broom  
Must gathered be, tall reeds at river's marge,

And osiers wild, with which the vines are bound.  
No pruning now, but o'er his finished rows  
The toil-worn keeper of the vineyard sings.  
Yet even now the soils must be raked loose,  
The dry earth not let crust; and even when ripe  
The cluster's peril is Jove's rainy sky.  
Far otherwise, the olive's growth requires  
Slight skill or care: of sickle's rounded blade  
Or harrows diligent they have no need;  
But when well rooted in the clod, resist  
Assaulting winds. The common soil supplies  
Moisture enough, and broken by the plough  
Full fruitage gives. Therefore fail not to plant  
The plenteous olive, blessed leaf of peace.

Fruit orchards, in like wise, when on firm stock  
Once grafted, have a native energy  
And by their own impulsion skyward climb,  
Not asking help of ours. And equally  
The greenwood wild its proper harvest shows  
Of crimson berries on bird-haunted boughs.  
Clover grows wild. The loftier forest gives  
Our torches and the hearthstone's night-long fire  
With liberal light. Who but must grateful be  
Such gifts to labor for? Why further tell  
Of willows pale or broom-plant's lowly stem,  
Which feed the flock, afford the shepherd shade  
And hedge his garden's close with honied flowers?  
How fair the sight of wind-swept boxwood groves,  
Of orient birth! or fir trees, mountain-born,  
And beauteous lands that owe no debt or wage

To implement of man! The barren woods  
On highest Caucasus, which furious winds  
Tear limb from limb and tireless whirl away,  
These too give profit: serviceable pine  
For building ships, cypress and cedar beams  
For roof and dwelling-place; the husbandmen  
Now fashion spokes, now hew them solid wheels  
For harvest wain, now fit the spreading keels  
Of river craft. The willows bear a crop  
Of basketry and withe, elm leaves are good  
For food and bedding, myrtle boughs are strong  
For javelins, cornel gives help in war,  
And yew trees bend them to fair Syrian bows.  
Smooth lindens, too, and boxwood, to the lathe  
So yielding, take fair shapes and let keen blades  
Hollow them out; the buoyant alder swims  
Along swift swollen waves, launched on the Po;  
While in the cavernous bark and crumbling bole  
Of huge holm-oak the bees their cities hide.  
What equal praise can Bacchus' gift receive,  
Bacchus, so oft occasioner of sin?  
Frenzied with him the Centaurs were laid low  
In death, — so Rhoetus, Pholus, also died.  
And lo! Hylaeus o'er the Lapithae  
Swings terrible the monster drinking-bowl!

Oh, more than blest, if their true bliss they knew,  
Are tillers of the land! whose sustenance  
From civil faction far, the righteous earth  
Ungrudgingly bestows. Their house at morn  
Sends forth no lengthening stream of flatterers



From crowded halls through lofty gates of pride;  
No columns with rich tortoise jewelled o'er  
Wound envious eyes, nor hangings pranked with gold,  
Nor brass Corinthian, nor once virgin wool  
Tainted with Tyrian poison, nor clean oil  
Of olive with lascivious odors fouled.  
But peace is theirs untroubled and a life  
From falsehoods free, their riches manifold  
Are calm, with ample fields, pools fountain-fed  
Caverns of rest in cold Thessalian vale,  
The lowing herd, soft slumber under trees,  
Green upland coverts, haunt of creatures wild.  
Their youth in labors indefatigable  
Is schooled to few desires; the gods receive  
Fit sacrifice and festal, and old age  
Is hallowed. 'Twas among such country folk  
The Virgin Justice, when she quit mankind,  
Left her last footprints upon earthly ground.

My fondest prayer is that the Muses dear,  
Life's joy supreme, may take me to their choir,  
Their priest, by boundless ecstasy possessed.  
The heavenly secrets may they show, the stars,  
Eclipses of the sun, the ministries  
Of the laborious moon, why quakes the earth,  
And by what power the oceans fathomless  
Rise, bursting every bound, then sink away  
To their own bed; why wintry suns so swift  
Roll down to ocean's stream; what obstacle  
Opposes then the lingering wheels of night.  
But if to such mysterious domain

Nature debar my entrance, if the blood  
Flows not so potent in my colder breast,  
Make me true lover of fair field and farm,  
Of streams in dewy vales, of rivers broad  
And lonely forests, far from pomp and fame.  
Oh, for Thessalian wilds and mountain steeps  
Where rove the maenads of Laconia,  
Or in the glens of snowy Thrace to dwell  
In shadow of innumerable boughs!

Blest was that man whose vision could explore  
The world's prime causes, conquering for man  
His horde of fears, his certain doom of death  
Inexorable, and the menace loud  
Of hungry Acheron! Yet happy he  
Who knows a shepherd's gods, protecting Pan,  
Sylvan of hoary head, and sisterhoods  
Of nymphs in wave and tree. He lives unmoved  
By public honors or the purple pall  
Of kingly power, or impious strife that stirs  
'Twixt brothers breaking faith, or barbarous host  
Of Dacian raiders from the rebel shores  
Of Danube, or by Rome's imperial care  
And kingdoms doomed to die; he need not weep  
For pity of the poor, nor lustful-eyed  
View great possessions. He plucks mellow fruit  
From his own orchard trees and gathers in  
The proffered harvest of obedient fields.  
Of ruthless laws, the forum's frenzied will,  
Of public scrolls of deed and archive sealed,  
He nothing knows. Let strangers to such peace

Trouble with oars the boundless seas or fly  
To wars, and plunder palaces of kings;  
Make desolate whole cities, casting down  
Their harmless gods and altars, that one's wine  
May from carved rubies gush, and slumbering head  
On Tyrian pillow lie. A man here hoards  
His riches, dreaming of his buried gold;  
Another on the rostrum's flattered pride  
Stares awe-struck. Him th' applause of multitudes,  
People and senators, when echoed shouts  
Ring through the house approving, quite enslaves.  
With civil slaughter and fraternal blood  
One day such reek exultant, on the next  
Lose evermore the long-loved hearth and home.

Meanwhile the husbandman upturns the glebe  
With well-curved share, inaugurating so  
The whole year's fruitful toil, by which he feeds  
His native land, his children's children too,  
His flocks and herds, and cattle worth his care.  
Ever the gifts flow on: the liberal year  
Teems with good apples, with the flock's increase,  
And sheaves of tasselled corn; the furrowed fields  
Bestow in bursting barns their goodly store.  
When winter comes at last, the olive mills  
Receive the sacred fruit, the roving swine  
Bring home full paunch of acorns, greenwood trees  
Drop nut and berry, many autumn fruits  
Still linger, and on sun-kissed, rocky slopes  
Some sweetened clusters hang. The livelong year  
His gathered children to his kisses cling.

His honest house lives chastely; full of milk  
Is all his herd, and on his meadows fair  
The lusty he-goats lock their butting horns.  
Such master keeps full well each festal day.  
Couched on green turf around the central fire,  
The revellers with garlands wreath the bowl  
Pouring to thee, Lenaeus, with due prayer.  
For all the shepherds of his flocks he holds  
A match at casting spears, on elm-tree trunk  
Carving the mark; or for the wrestler's crown  
Naked they come with bodies hard as steel.

Such way of life the ancient Sabines knew,  
And Remus with his twin; thus waxed the power  
Of the Etrurian cities; thus rose Rome  
The world's chief jewel, and with towering wall  
Compassed in one her hills and strongholds seven.  
Yea, and before the Cretan King assumed  
The sceptre of the skies, ere impious man  
Began on murdered flocks to feast his kind,  
Such life on earth did golden Saturn show.  
None heard the trumpet's blast, nor direful clang  
Of smitten anvils loud with shaping swords.

But now our lengthened course is run to goal;  
From necks of steaming steeds we loosen rein.

### GEORGIC III

Thee, Pales, mighty power, I next will sing;  
And thee Apollo, theme for many a song,  
A shepherd once in Thessaly; and ye  
O streams and forests of Arcadian Pan!  
All other subjects which could charm a mind  
At leisure for a song, are they not staled  
Even to vulgar ears? Who has not heard  
Of King Eurystheus' pitiless commands  
And infamous Busiris' sacrifice?  
Who has not the lost lovely Hylas known,  
Or Delos to Latona's travail kind,  
High-born Hippodamas, and Pelops proud,  
The laurelled, ivory-shouldered charioteer?

Some new path must be tried if ever I,  
With wing uplifted from the level ground,  
May on the public voice triumphant rise.  
I will be first, if life be given, to bear  
Home to my native land the Muses' song  
From their Aonian hill. I first to thee,  
My Mantua, will bring Arabian palms.  
My vows shall build thee in the meadows green  
A marble temple near the river's rim,  
Where the wide-watered Mincius winding slow  
In mantle of soft sedge hides all his shore.  
Within the central shrine shall Caesar be  
And the whole temple bless. Before his eyes



I, clothed in purple garb victorious,  
Will lead a hundred four-horse chariots by,  
Along the river-bank; the youth of Greece,  
Spurning Olympian or Isthmian crown,  
Shall in fleet foot-race for a garland run,  
Or box, well paired, with gauntlets of tough hide.  
Myself will weave of well-trimmed olive leaf,  
A garland for my brows, and offerings bring.  
Even now I see with visionary joy  
The due procession to the shrine, and death  
Of fair, white bulls.

Or haply there shall be  
A theatre with shifting scene; and when  
The purple curtain lifts to hide the stage,  
The suppliant Britons shall be brodered there.  
I'll carve in massy ivory and gold  
On temple doors the wars of India's sons  
Against the Roman's ever prosperous arms.  
There too the pictured streams of Nile shall move  
With mighty flood and swollen waves of war.  
And lofty columns decked with beaks of brass  
Shall rise in air. Hard by them shall appear  
All Asia's prostrate towns, and snowy peaks  
Of far Armenia smitten and subdued.  
The Parthian in undaunted flight will hurl  
His wingèd barbs behind; and I will show  
Two trophies, from far-sundered nations won,  
And twice subdued, to grace his triumph day,  
With tribes in chains from either ocean's shore.  
There I will raise in breathing Parian stone  
The statues of his far-descended line

The offspring of Assaracus, the men  
Of Jove's begetting, kingly sires of Troy,  
And Troy's first builder, the bright Cynthian god.  
Envy accurst, unhappy, will behold  
Avenging Furies and with terror see  
The cruel stream of Hades, the coiled snakes,  
And Sisyphus with ever frustrate stone.

But ere such song is mine, I must abide  
In leafy forest and untrodden glades  
Among the wood-nymphs. O Maecenas, thou  
Hast laid this not light task upon my muse.  
Without thy help and smile my thoughts attempt  
Nothing of noble note. Up then! away!  
Tarry no more! I hear the huntsmen fling  
Their loud halloo along Cithaeron's vale,  
The hounds of Sparta run and noble steeds,  
The pride of Argos, while the vocal groves  
Make answering duplications of the sound.  
Yet shall I at no distant hour be bold  
To gird me for a song in Caesar's praise,  
His famous battles tell, and send his fame  
To future ages distant as the day  
Of old Tithonus' birth from Caesar's own.

Whoe'er ambitious for Olympian palms,  
Breeds horses or strong bullocks for the plough,  
Must make the choice of mothers his first care.  
For cattle, take one of grim-lowering brows  
With ugly head, strong neck, and dew-lap dropped  
From chin to knee; and be the generous flank

Long to excess; let every part appear  
Of large proportion, even her wide-spread hoof  
And thick-shagged ears beneath the twisted horn.  
One with white spots I favor most, whose head  
Butts at the yoke rebelliously; her look  
Is rather like a bull's; her stature tall;  
Her tail-tip sweeps her hoof-prints as she goes.  
The age for motherhood and Hymen's laws  
Ceases at ten years, ripens after four;  
Her later time is neither apt to breed  
Nor vigorous for the plough. Take heed likewise  
To choose the sires while the flush of youth  
Still in the herd prevails. Delay not long  
The mating of young cattle, but supply  
An oft succeeding offspring to the herd.  
Life's first, best season soon takes flight away  
From hapless, mortal creatures; then disease  
Arrives, with weariness and sad old age,  
Till death, the harsh and ruthless, sweeps away.  
Thy herd has always certain few whose shape  
Thou seekest to improve. Let them breed oft;  
And lest too late thou watch its numbers wane,  
Foster each year the fruitful tribe's increase.

Breed horses with not less selective skill;  
The males, who give the breed increase,  
Watch from their tenderest youth. The colt  
Of noble line steps somewhat loftily  
Along the field, and his soft pasterns show  
An easy motion. Bold is he, and prompt  
To try a strange path, ford a threatening stream,

Or dare an unknown bridge, nor has he fear  
Of harmless noises. His neck arches high,  
The head is outlined clear, the belly short,  
Back broad; his vigorous and brawny breast  
Has swelling muscles. The superior hues  
Are dappled or bright bay, the least approved  
Are white and sorrel. If the clash of arms  
Rings from afar, he will not be restrained;  
His ears prick up, the limbs quake, and he pours  
From eager nostrils the swift-gathering fire.  
Luxuriant his mane, which tosses free  
Down his right shoulder; twixt his ample loins  
The chine runs double; deep into the ground  
Cuts his resounding hoof of ponderous horn.  
Such steed was Cyllarus who felt the reins  
Of Pollux, Leda's son; such also they,  
Renowned in Grecian song, the well-matched team  
Of Mars; or that immortal pair which drew  
The chariot of Peleus' mighty son:  
Such also was swift Saturn, when he fled  
His jealous wife's discovery, and flung  
From neck disguised a stallion's rippling mane,  
Lifting to Pelion's top a loud, shrill neigh.

But even such, if sickness drag him down  
Or in slow lapse of years he droop and fail,  
Hide safe at home and mercifully spare  
His not despised old age. An aged steed  
Is cold to Venus' call and fruitlessly  
Attempts th' unwelcome proof; or if erewhile  
He rise to the encounter, his heat burns

In vain, as oft an ineffectual fire  
Runs on through stubble. Therefore chiefly note  
The horse's years and of what quality  
His mettle and condition; after this  
What sort his sires have bred, and if he seem  
To sorrow in defeat and feel proud joy  
When winner of the palm. Who has not seen  
In what impetuous contest o'er the plain  
The rival chariots from the barrier pour,  
While kindling hopes the charioteers impel,  
And throbs of fear each eager heart possess?  
Along the twisted lash they forward lean  
And fling free rein; on speeds the burning wheel;  
Now plunging low, now leaping to the sky,  
Through vacant air the wild yoke seems to rise  
Or on the winds to soar; no stop or stay;  
Up rolls the yellow dust; their smoking flanks  
Reek with hot foam-flakes and the followers' breath.  
So dear to them is praise, and victory  
So worth the pains!

'Twas Erichthonius  
Who first dared yoke him in the chariot  
Four steeds together and o'er whirling wheels  
Drive forth to victory. The Lapithae  
Of Thessaly were earliest to lay  
The rein on mounted barb and bid him move  
Obedient in the ring; they lessoned first  
The noble knight-at-arms to pace the ground  
With lofty-curvetting on stately steed.  
Each kind of horsemanship needs equal care;  
In either the wise masters of the art



Choose mettle, spirit, speed, and hot, young blood,  
Though haply once some older horse has chased  
The flying foe in war, or boasts a sire  
Of famous lineage from Epirus' shore,  
Or walled Mycenae, or of ancient breed  
Traced back to Neptune's primal gift divine.  
These points observed, men train the chosen sire  
Against the breeding-time with generous fare,  
And strive to make the husband of the herd  
Full-fleshed and strong; they cut him tender grass,  
Give corn and much fresh water, that his strength  
Suffice him for his labor of delight;  
For none but weak colts come of ill-fed sires.  
The herd of mares however is reduced  
To leanness, by design; and when the heat  
For mating first appears, they are restrained  
From cropping leafy food or drinking long  
At copious springs; 'tis often well-advised  
To run them hard and sweat them in the sun  
What time the threshing floor is heaped up high  
With trodden corn, and clouds of chaff are flung  
Abroad upon the winnowing, western wind.  
This do they lest fertility should fail,  
As if in furrows rankly overgrown;  
And that the procreant power be entertained  
With appetite, and hidden deep away.

After the mating days one watches less  
The weal of sires, and mothers need thy care.  
When they have wandered with a burdened womb,  
For months gone by, no longer such employ

Yoked in a loaded wain, nor urge them on  
At gallop o'er the highway, or allow  
To hurry through the fields and swollen streams.  
But in still valleys let them feed, beside  
Smooth-watered streams, where beds of moss abound,  
Or soft, green grass grows nigh the river's edge,  
Or sheltering caves o'erarch with rock-thrown shade.  
But near the woods of Silarus, and where  
Alburnus' ilex groves wear living green,  
A gad-fly swarms (whose native Roman name,  
Asilus, turns to Oestros in the Greek).  
'Tis merciless, and with vociferous rage  
Whirs loud, till oft whole herds in panic wild  
Run scattering through the wood; the smitten sky  
And all the forests by thy shallow stream,  
Tanagrus, echo far the bellowing sound.  
Once Juno with this cruel prodigy  
Wreaked her revenge, when she contrived to plague  
The heifer Io, chased from land to land.  
This insect which beneath the blaze of noon  
Is fiercer yet, must to thy pregnant herd  
Never come nigh; 'twere better thou shouldst drive  
Afield at early dawn, or let them feed  
When dim stars lead the vanguard of the night.

After their birth, transfer thy skill and care  
To the young calves, and brand them every one  
With marks of pedigree, or signs to tell  
Which shall be breeders, which to altars brought  
For sacrifice, or which shall plough the ground,  
Breaking the clod in rough, unfurrowed fields.

The general herd may roam the meadows green,  
But those that for some useful rustic toil  
Thou wouldst prepare, must, while but tender calves,  
Be disciplined, and lessoned to obey  
In docile youth's responsive, plastic hour.  
First braid beneath their throats an easy band  
Of pliant osier; when the necks, once free,  
Accept this servitude, then match in pairs,  
Joining the collars, and compel the team  
To walk in step; soon let them daily draw  
Unloaded wagons through the field, and make  
Light hoofprints in the dust; but afterward  
Let laboring, beechen axle creak and strain  
Beneath their burden, and the brass-tipped pole  
Compel the wheels below. Nor at this time  
Keep thy half-broken steers on grass alone,  
Nor niggard willow-leaf and swamp-grown reeds,  
But feed them grain by hand. Nor let the cows  
Brim the white milk-pails full, as used to be  
The habit of our fathers, but each day  
Give generous udders to their offspring dear.

But if thy hopes and wishes rather turn  
To war, to troops of charging cavalry,  
Or where Alpheus rolls to speed swift wheels  
At Elis, and by Pisa's olives wild  
Hallowed of Jove, to urge the flying car, —  
See that thy chosen courser early learns  
To face proud warriors in arms, to bear  
The scream of trumpet and the thundering  
Of chariots as they pass; in the stall, too,

Let him hear clanking bit and bridle chain.  
He must exult if his dear rider's voice  
Shout in his praise, and love the friendly hand  
That claps his neck so loud. These noises all  
From the first day that weans him from his dam  
Should often meet his ear. Put soft bits too  
Between his tender lips while yet his frame  
Is trembling, weak and scarcely touched of time.  
After three summers past, the fourth at hand,  
Train him to gallop circles and to prance  
With even-sounding step, to paw the air  
With freely-lifted knees. His work should show  
Strong effort; afterward the racer's speed  
Will shame the winds, as under loosened rein  
Along the open course he skims, he flies,  
Scarce printing his light hoof-tips in the sand.  
'Tis like that wind from Hyperborean clime  
That charging down o'er Scythia's wintry plains  
Scatters the rainless clouds; the harvest fields  
Of bending corn and liquid lakes outspread  
Heave in the ceaseless blast; the forest's top  
Screams loud, and long waves pound the sandy shore,  
As onward sweeps the gale o'er flood and field.  
Such steed will sweat him at Olympian goals.  
Circling the race-course, bathed in bloody foam,  
Or haply with an easier yoke will bear  
Some traveller's coach along the Belgic land.

When schooled and broken thus, thou mayst allow  
Corn liberally mixed, and let his frame  
Yet larger grow; but if an untrained colt

Feed high, his spirits will too much abound,  
And even if harnessed, will not deign to bear  
The sinuous lash or heed hard-curbing reins.  
But naught of discipline so fortifies  
A powerful beast as that he be restrained  
From joy of Venus and blind passion's goad,  
Whether the bull or stallion be thy care.  
Therefore the bull is exiled and confined  
In lonely fields, where ramparts of steep hills  
Confront him or wide-sundering waters flow,  
Or at full mangers captive must he stand.  
Sight of his female wastes his strength away  
By slow degrees, and bids him seek no more  
Green pasture or cool woodland; for her charm  
Sweetly entices, and her wooers proud  
In horn-locked duel the wild suit decide.

Behold on mighty Sila's uplands broad  
That fair-flanked heifer in the herbage green!  
Yonder the bulls, exchanging many a wound,  
Do battle mightily; dark streaming gore  
Their bodies bathes, as with opposèd horns  
Struggling and thrusting they make bellowings loud,  
While groves and vaulted skies the din prolong.  
No longer now the rivals in that war  
Dwell in one field; the fallen chief withdraws,  
Bound to far exile in some land unknown,  
Lamenting loud his shame, and many a wound  
The haughty victor gave; but mourning more  
The loss of her he loved, still unavenged,  
He quits with backward glance his native fields.



Henceforth he tests and trains his vanquished powers  
With painful care; he sullenly reclines  
On bare stones for a bed, and for his food  
Crops thorny leafage or sharp-pointed reed.  
He puts himself to proof; he disciplines  
The fury of his horns; butts at a tree;  
Would with his fierce thrusts wound the passing wind,  
And tosses up loose turf, rehearsing war.  
Soon gathering all his force, with strength renewed  
He flings his banners forth, provokes the war,  
And hurls him headlong on the slumbering foe.  
'Tis thus some huge wave from the open sea  
Begins far off to whiten, then uplifts  
Its swelling breast and swiftly landward rolls,  
Roars monstrous through the rocks and forward falls  
Like a great mountain, while the watery deep  
Boils up in whirling, eddying surge and flings  
Aloft in air a cloud of darkening sand.

For all terrestrial kinds, or beast or man,  
All Ocean's brood and flocks of bright-hued birds  
Haste to the same fierce fire. One power of love  
Possesses all. Now with unwonted wrath  
Forgetful of her whelps, the lioness  
Will roam the land; now bears of shapeless mould  
Deal death and ravine through the forests wide;  
The boar looks wildest now, the tiger's eye  
Most terrible. Unhappy is the man  
Who travels now the lonely Libyan sands:  
Look how his stallion quakes in every limb,  
Suddenly smitten, if the nostrils keen

Smell on the wind his mate. No rider's curb  
Can hold him back, nor frantic whip restrain  
Nor even precipitous rocks and caverned hills,  
Nor river in his path, though tumbling waves  
Engulf and steal away the mountain's wall.  
Now will the wild boar on the Sabine hills  
Sharpen his teeth, root up and fling afar  
The forest's earth, rub fiercely on a tree  
His bristly side and toughen where he may  
His shoulders 'gainst a rival's tusky jaw.

What tale of man's impassioned youth to tell ?  
When love, un pitying, breathes into the bones  
Its boundless fire ? Though bursting clouds of storm  
Roughen the barrier firth, the lover swims  
Through the black, lingering night, though o'er him howl  
The unlocked thunders of the vasty sky,  
And breaking seas along the solemn crags  
Bid him come back; nor can his parents' tears  
Recall him, nor that maiden fond and fair  
Doomed in his cruel death herself to die.  
Why tell how leopards woo, the spotty team  
Of Bacchus' chariot, or hungry tribes  
Of wolves and dogs, or of those battles bold  
The timorous, mild-eyed stags for love will wage ?  
Yet of all raging loves most notable  
Is that of mares, and wildest. Venus' self  
This quality within them breathed, what time  
Hard by the Theban town th' infuriate four  
Devoured the luckless Glaucus limb by limb.  
The mad lust drives them up the pathless steeps

Of Gargara, or through Bithynian floods  
Of thunderous wave, as over hill and stream  
Dauntless they swim or climb. Soon as their bones  
Kindled with fire (chiefly in the Spring,  
For Spring it is that fans the flame anew)  
They mount conspicuous rocks, and turn to catch  
The breathing zephyr's light caress; for oft,  
Wondrous to tell, ere to a husband given,  
The west wind makes them teem. Then scatter they  
O'er rock-strewn hills and deep-descending dales  
Not to the east nor to the rising sun,  
But to the north and west, or where the south  
Blows, saddening the sky with rain and cold.  
Then flows a slimy fluid from their groin  
Which shepherds rightly call Hippomanes.  
This witches often gather, mix with herbs,  
And mutter on the mixture baleful charms.

But time runs by, irreparable time,  
As mastered by my subject's charm, I course  
Slowly from point to point.

Enough is told  
Of herds and horses. Now a second half  
Of my large task remains: wool-bearing sheep  
To tend, and goats, the shaggy-haired; in this  
Is an exceeding toil, but sturdy swains  
Find hope of honor so. My mind, not less,  
Well knows the toil of mastering in fit words  
This humble business. But fond desire  
Impels me the Parnassian steep to climb  
Through fields still virgin; 'twere great joy to pass

By easy slopes to the Pierian Spring  
Where trace of earlier footstep is not seen.  
O Pales, awe of shepherds, let thy name  
Lend loftier measures to my lowly song.

First I decree that all the sheep shall feed,  
While waiting for the leafy Spring's return,  
In comfortable folds. Let the hard ground  
Be deeply strewn with straw and carpeted  
With bundles of fresh fern, lest icy frost  
Harm the soft lambs, inducing foul disease  
In foot or fell. I also give command  
The goats shall have good store of arbuté boughs,  
And running brooks to drink of. Let the stalls,  
Screened from the wind, confront the winter sun  
And meet his beam at noon, what time  
Aquarius from cold declining star  
Drops on the year's last days his dew and rain.  
For thy goat-flock needs not less thoughtful care  
Than sheep, nor is its use or value less.  
Though chosen fleeces dipped in Tyrian dye  
Fetch handsome profit, yet the she-goats bear  
By twins and triplets; their supply of milk  
Is plenteous, and the more the milk-pail foams  
From well-drawn udder, richer falls the stream  
The more the dug is pressed. Also men sheer  
From hoary, pointed chins of Libyan goats  
The beard, and their long wavy shag,  
To weave a cloth for camps, or for the garb  
Of sailors. A goat-flock will find its food  
In leafy woodlands and the highest peaks

Of an Arcadian mountain; it will browse  
On thorny vines or hardy shrubs that spread  
On inaccessible slopes; yet of themselves  
Faithfully home they come, and with them lead  
Their little ones, when oft they scarce can lift  
O'er the high door-sill their full, swinging bags.  
Since, then, these ask so little anxious care  
Of mortal man, protect them with all heed  
From wintry frost and storms of wind and snow:  
Give them good fare, fresh twigs, and hay enough  
✓ From open barns through all the season's cold.

But when glad summer and the zephyr's voice  
Call forth both flocks to dale and meadow green,  
Then to cool pastures let us haste along  
While beams the morning star and dawn is new,  
While every sod is glistening and the flocks  
Find on the tender grass the sweet, fresh dew.  
But when the day's fourth hour bids thirst return,  
And locusts wake the copse with plaintive song,  
Then at the wells or cisterns large and full  
Deep let the creatures drink a flowing stream  
From wooden runnels. Later, at high noon,  
Lead to a shaded vale, where Jove's great oak,  
Long-lived and strong, flings forth its mighty boughs,  
Or where some dark-leaved grove of ilex trees  
Sleeps in its solemn shade. A second time  
Lead them to watering and feed once more  
At sundown, when the cooling twilight star  
Makes milder air, and o'er a freshened vale  
Rises the dewy moon; from river shore  
Kingfishers cry, the finch from briar and thorn.



What if I tell thee in my lengthened rhyme  
Of Libyan shepherds, of their far-spread range  
And the rude tents they dwell in? Day and night,  
Or for a whole month long, their flocks find food  
Over vast deserts roving, — the great plain  
Stretches so far. Numidia's herdsman bears  
All his wealth with him, house and household gods,  
His arms, his faithful dog of Spartan breed,  
His Cretan quiver. Carrying so his arms,  
The Roman legionary, burdened sore,  
Takes his far journey to an alien land,  
And fronts his foe before th' expected hour  
In well-pitched camp and ordered lines of war.  
Far different is man's life where Scythia's tribes  
By the wide waters of Maeotis stray,  
Where Danube rolls its troubled, tawny waves,  
And where the ridge of Thracian Rhodope  
To southward curves. All cattle there are kept  
In well-closed barns; for in that land is seen  
No grass, no greenwood fair, but all the plain  
Lies shapeless in great banks of snow,  
Frozen deep down and drifted seven ells high.  
'Tis winter without end, and ceaseless blows  
The frosty northern gale: Seldom the sun  
Can break the dismal gloom — nor when his team  
Bear him along th' ethereal sky, nor when  
He dips his sinking car in crimsoned seas.  
On the swift-coursing river suddenly  
Congeals a solid crust, and soon the stream  
Sustains the rolling weight of iron wheels,  
Once a ship's channel, now a wagon road.

Brass cauldrons burst asunder, oftentimes  
The garments stiffen on one's body, casks of wine  
Are broken piecemeal with an axe, whole ponds  
Are turned to solid ice, and icicles  
Upon a man's rough beard grow stiff and strong.  
The whole wide realm of air continually  
Is thick with falling snow, the flocks and herds  
Perish, the mighty forms of oxen stand  
Frost covered, and a line of huddling deer  
Lie torpid under heavy snow, just seen  
By their protruding horns. In hunting these  
No hounds run forth, no net or snare is laid,  
No crimson feathers cheat the trembling herd;  
But while they vainly breast the drifted snows  
Men slay them at close quarters with sharp steel.  
They fall loud moaning, and their conquerors  
With shouts of exultation bear them home.  
For in large caverns, burrowed under ground,  
The hunters live in safety and at ease.  
Oak boughs heaped high, whole logs of giant elm  
They roll upon the hearth to feed the blaze.  
Long nights they pass in wassail and good cheer  
And imitate our vintage with full bowls  
Of bitter cider and strong, yeasty brews.  
Such is the tameless race of mighty men  
That keep their flocks beneath the arctic star,  
And by Cimmerian tempests buffeted  
In tawny furs of beasts their bodies clothe.

If wool thy business be, let prickly shrubs,  
Thornbush and burr, be absent from thy fields.

Yet fattening herbage shun, and early choose  
White, soft-fleeced sheep, observing well the sires.  
For though a ram be spotless, if his tongue  
Look black about the palate, then beware  
Lest he should blot the fleeces of his breed .  
With dusky flaws. Go, fetch thee in his stead  
Another from thy fields, in fleece all snow.  
Arcadian Pan, if ancient lore be true,  
Lured thee, O goddess moon, to be his love,  
Then won thee and embraced. To wild wood shades  
He called thee, and thou didst not scorn the call.  
But if thy trade is milk, let thine own hands  
Bring heap of lotos leaves and flowering stems  
Of the tall clover, and the mangers fill  
With salted grass. The flocks then sate their thirst  
At flowing streams, their full bags rounding well,  
And lending salty relish to the milk.  
Some from the dams the new-born kids restrain,  
Muzzling their lips with steel. What milk is drawn  
At daybreak or in daytime, the next night  
Goes to the cheese-press; but if drawn at dark  
Or sunset hour, the shepherd in the morn  
Carries it curded to the market-place  
In wicker bowls, or salting frugally  
Shelves it at home to swell his winter store.  
Nor be thy dogs last cared for. The swift hounds  
Of Sparta or the fierce Molossian breed,  
Feed both alike on rich whey. Fear not then  
Thieves in the night, nor wolves about thy fold  
Nor wandering gipsies creeping up unseen.  
Full often with thy dogs thou shalt pursue

The shy wild ass, the rabbit or the doe;  
Oft from wet lair in underbrush or fen  
Thy dogs shall start the boar and chase him far,  
Loud-barking; or along the lofty hills  
Vociferous drive into thy net the deer.

Learn also in thy folds betimes to burn  
Sweet cedar and with fumes of galbanum  
To drive the evil-smelling serpents off.  
For under stalls uncared for often lurks  
The stinging adder, he that fearful flies  
From sunshine; or that snake is there whose haunt  
Is under ambush in the darksome ground,  
A ruthless scourge of cattle. 'Gainst the earth  
He coils close, slavering poison on the herd.  
Pick up a stone, my shepherd, find a club!  
And where his proud neck stretches, hissing, swoln, —  
Down with him! Look how cunningly he hides  
His coward head, while all the middle coils  
And lengthened tail relax, as winding slow  
The last of him is seen. Who has not known  
That wicked serpent of Calabrian dales?  
With lifted front his scaled head backward writhes  
And the long belly shows great spots and stains.  
When rivers from full fountain-heads flow down,  
While all the land is wet with showers of Spring  
And rains from southward blown, this serpent dwells  
In pools and oozy shores, where greedily  
With fishes and the ever-babbling frogs  
He crams his black maw. When the fen is dry  
And the hot soil cracks wide, then leaps he forth

Upon dry land, and with swift eyes of fire  
Runs fiercely o'er the pastures, wild with thirst,  
And of the heat in terror. Let me then  
Not slumber careless out of doors, nor dare  
On grass-grown woodland ridge to lie at ease,  
What time that creature casting his old skin  
Crawls out reclothed and glittering, having left  
The eggs or young ones in the hole. Oh, see  
That lifted head and quivering, cloven tongue!

Now of the signs and causes let me tell  
Of sickness and infection. A foul scab  
Attacks thy sheep, when downpours of cold rain  
Have chilled them to the bone, and winter fields  
Are rough with hoar-frost; or when sweat unclean  
Lies on them after shearing and their sides  
Are wounded with sharp thorns. 'Tis fearing this  
The shepherd lets the whole flock deeply bathe  
In rivers pure; the ram, plunged in the pool,  
With his drenched fleece is left to float down stream.  
Soon after shearing, for good ointment use  
The lees of olive oil, quicksilver mixing  
With native sulphur and the wholesome tar  
Of Ida's pines; wax also melted soft  
Juice of sea-onion, potent hellebore  
And black bitumen. But no remedy  
Brings happier issue to the shepherd's care  
Than with a sharp blade to lay open wide  
The ulcerous spot; for covered if it be  
The poison feeds and spreads the more, — even while  
The shepherd, failing of resolve, lays not



A healing hand upon the wound, but sits  
Inactive, asking heaven for luckier days.  
Moreover even when the pestilence  
Strikes the poor, bleating creature's every bone,  
His limbs with fever wasting, it works well  
To check the kindled fire, severing  
Close to the hoof-cleft some blood-spouting vein.  
This is the art the wild Bisaltæ know,  
And fierce Gelonian when he wanders nigh  
The peak of Rhodope, or scours the plains  
Of lonely Danube, where his drink and food  
Is mixture of mare's blood with curds and whey.  
But if at distance thou shalt mark some sheep  
That creeps too often to the gentle shade,  
Listlessly cropping but the tallest grass,  
Lagging behind the flock, or as it feeds  
Low-crouching in mid-pasture, and at eve  
Faring home late alone, — then take thy knife  
And cut this blemish from thy folds away  
Before among th' unheeding multitude  
The dread contagion scatter. For wild winds  
That fly before the tempest far at sea  
Come not more thick and fast than speedy plagues  
Which visit herded beasts. The sickness falls  
Not here and there on few, but sweeps along  
Whole provinces of pleasant greenwood shade  
Effacing dams and sires and all the breed.

This well he knows who e'er has looked upon  
Th' aerial Alps, where on the slopes are seen  
The Noric citadels and pastures wide  
Through which Timavus rolls. One even now

Beholds the shepherd kingdoms desolate  
Though many seasons since have passed; the vales,  
The spacious glades, lie all untenanted,  
For o'er this region in the days gone by  
A year of woe from heaven's corrupted air  
Descended. Through the autumn's pitiless heat  
It still burned on and showered death and bale  
On every kind of creature tame or wild.  
Even the lakes it poisoned, and infused  
Corruption on all forms of food. The way  
Of death was strange: when parching fire  
Through every vein had run and cramped with pain  
Each wretched limb, then back again would flow  
A copious humor which insidiously  
Corrupted the whole body. Oftentimes  
While solemn offerings to the gods were made,  
The chosen victim there, his forehead bound  
With snow-white woolen fillet, would drop down  
Death-stricken, while the aged ministrants  
Stared helpless. Or if haply a priest's knife  
Had slain already, then the entrails laid  
On altar flames burned not; the augur's art  
Could make no answer when the people sued.  
The sacrificial knife bore scarce a stain  
Of blood, and the light surface of the sand  
Was scarcely darkened by the sickly stream.  
Then all in flowery pasture-lands the beasts  
Lay dying, and at mangers full of corn  
Breathed their dear lives away; fierce madness fell  
On dogs of gentlest kind; a racking cough  
Attacked the swine and strangled their fat throats.

The horse that took the palm now has no care  
For any task or test; he crops no more  
The pastures green, and will no longer taste  
The flowing rill, but stamps upon the ground  
With restless foot; his ears lie limp and low,  
He sweats all over fitfully, that cold  
Sweat of a dying creature; or his skin  
Is parched, and if you stroke it, stiff and hard.  
These are the symptoms of the warning days  
Before the outbreak. But as more and more  
The plague has gathered power, both his eyes  
With fever glow, and all his laboring breath  
Is deeply drawn, sometimes with piteous groan  
And sobs that shake his sides; his nostrils flow  
With darkened blood, the rough tongue seems to cleave  
To the infected cavities. At first  
'Twas helpful to pour down a draught of wine  
From flowing horn, which seemed the one last hope  
To save the dying beast; but later on  
This remedy was death. With force renewed  
The fevers raged, and in death's agony  
Their own white teeth their flesh in sunder tore.  
May heaven from all the righteous turn away  
Such curse, and send it on their enemies!

See the bull also! 'neath the ploughshare's weight  
His sides steam, and he falls; his foamy lips  
Are dripping blood, and soon he groans his last.  
His master sad at heart takes off the yoke  
From mated steer that moans his brother's death,  
And in mid furrow leaves the useless plough.

Yet will the freed bull take no comfort now  
In shade of lofty grove or meadow green,  
Nor where, leaving its rockstrewn bed, the stream  
Clearer than amber meets the widening plain.  
For soon his flanks hang down, his heavy eyes  
Are darkened with down-drooping weariness,  
The neck hangs near the ground. Ah, what avail  
The creature's sober tasks and fruitful days,  
And heavy clods well broken by his plough ?  
What does it profit that he ne'er took harm  
From glutton banquets and luxurious wine ?  
He fared on leaves and grassy delicates  
By art unspoiled; his cups were bubbling springs  
And rivers swift of flow; no lurking care  
E'er troubled or destroyed his wholesome sleep.

During that single year of plague, they say,  
All the kine failed for Juno's offering  
In that fair land, and to her lofty shrines  
Came chariots drawn by elks in ill-matched pairs.  
The people broke the soil with rakes, or dug  
With hands and nails to plant the needed corn,  
And o'er steep hills dragged up the creaking wain  
Straining their own necks to the heavy load.  
No wolf that year did thievishly explore  
The precincts of the fold, nor haunt by night  
Where the flock lies; a darker form of fear  
Had made him harmless. Even timid does  
And swift-foot stags now wandered without heed  
Among the dogs and close to cottage doors.  
Now even the offspring of the boundless sea

Each breed of things that swim, the rolling waves  
Cast forth upon the ocean's sandy bound  
Like shipwrecked dead; and unto haunts unknown  
Up flowing rivers drove great troops of seals.  
Defenceless in his labyrinthine den  
The viper died, and water-serpents foul,  
Their scales with terror bristling. Even the air  
Befriends the birds no more, but down they fall  
Leaving in some far cloud their vital breath.

This sickness did not yield to change of food.  
The leeches' arts brought bane, and those most skilled  
Despaired and fled, — e'en Chiron, Saturn's son,  
And sage Melampus, Amythaon's heir.  
For now in wrath, from Stygian gloom sent forth,  
Arose pale-browed Tisiphone who drove  
A troop of plagues and sickening alarms  
Before her as she moved, and day by day  
Upreared to vaster height her hungry head.  
With bleatings of the sheep and bellowing cries  
The parching river banks and helpless hills  
Re-echoed loud. Her slaughter now she poured  
On multitudes together, and heaped up  
In stall and barn the sickly carcasses,  
That fell in foul decay, till wisdom learned  
To bury deep and to great pits consign.  
For no hides could be used; the inward parts  
No streams could cleanse nor any flame make pure.  
Nor could the fleece, plague-bitten and unclean  
Be shorn, for none upon the filthy wool  
Could lay a hand. If any one dared try



To wear th' infected garb, he straight was seized  
With burning rashes and his limbs exhaled  
An evil-smelling dew. But not for long  
He lingered in his pain: the fiery curse,  
Spread fast and all the tainted frame consumed.

## GEORGIC IV

Of honey, wind-bred bounty of the sky,  
Next let me sing. And to the humble task  
Once more, Maecenas, lend a gracious ear!  
A pageant wonderful to thee I show,  
The story of a people light as air,  
Their large-souled leaders, and of all their kind  
The customs, occupations, kingdoms, wars.  
A task of narrow span, but no small praise,  
If unpropitious powers bar not my way,  
And favoring Phoebus grant a poet's prayer.

First find the bees safe shelter and abode  
Where no winds enter, such as backward blow  
The honey-bearers from their homeward way;  
And where no sheep, no kids with frolic horn,  
Trample upon the flowers, nor roving calf  
Swish through the dewy grass and tread it down.  
Let not the scale-backed, painted lizard peer  
Too nigh the bees' full barns, nor thievish birds,  
Fly-catchers, or the swallow whose soft breast  
By her own murderous hands was dabbled o'er.  
For such make forage far and wide and bear  
In ruthless beak the insect harvesters  
As sweet, winged morsels to their nestlings wild.  
But flowing fountains near the hives should be,  
Still pools with fresh, green mosses bordered round,

And through the grasses a small rill should run.  
Above their portals let a branching palm  
Or large wild olive its deep shadows throw,  
That when new-chosen chiefs lead forth in Spring  
The young swarm, and escaping from their cells  
The playful legion greets its native air,  
Then the cool bank may lure them to repose  
From the hot sun-beam, and the neighboring tree  
Its leafy hospitality extend.

In the mid-stream, though slow or swift it run,  
Set willow boughs or large, smooth stepping-stones,  
To serve for bridges where th' alighting bee  
May dry his spread wings in the summer sun,  
If, ere he heeded, some impetuous breeze  
Have drenched or wrecked him in that little sea.  
Around the place let verdant cassias grow,  
With much strong-scented thyme, and let the stream  
Flow through sweet beds of thirsting violets.  
The hives themselves, if stitched of hollow bark  
Or plaited basket-work, should have but doors  
Of narrow compass, lest in winter's chill  
The honey thicken, or in sultry days  
Melt and ooze off: for bees make anxious toil  
'Gainst either trouble; with no aimless care  
They eagerly seal up all crevices,  
All air-holes in their walls, filling the cracks  
With flowery pollen; they collect and save  
Their thick glue for this work, which faster binds  
Than bird-lime or the pitch of Phrygian pines.  
Often they build a secret hearth and home

By burrowing in the earth, I hear men say;  
And hid in hollowed crags their nests are found,  
Or deep in cavernous bole of fallen tree.  
Thou likewise o'er the bee-hives' crannied sides  
Wilt smear warm clay, patting it down, and then  
Strew leaves on top. But let no yew-tree grow  
Where the bees haunt, nor burn red crabs near by,  
Nor let there be deep mud-holes or the stench  
Of filthy slough; nor let o'erarching rocks  
Be rife with echoes doubling every cry.

Now further counsel. When the golden sun  
Bids the defeated winter sink away  
Under the earth, and quite unbars the sky  
To summer's burning glory, then the bees  
Roam over glade and grove, harvesting well  
The gorgeous flowers, and sip on lightsome wing  
The surface of the streams. From this time forth  
They fondly tend, with sweet, mysterious joy,  
The young brood in the nests, and skilfully  
Sculpture the wax and mould the honey-comb.  
At the same season, when the caravan  
Pours from the hives and skyward, starward, soars  
Along the glowing air, your eyes behold  
With wonder how the wind will gather them  
In one dark cloud. Then watch them where they move!  
For always flowing springs and sheltering trees  
They seek for: then take heavy-scented herbs  
Bruised balsam and the wax-flower's humble weed,  
And sprinkle with their juice some chosen spot  
And clash loud cymbals like a Corybant.

At this balm-breathing place the swarm will stay  
And rear, as is their wont, the future brood.

But sometimes they declare a war: for oft  
Between two kings a fatal strife begins  
Tumultuous, and one discerns from far  
The anger of the mob, whose hearts leap up  
All fury for the fight. A loud alarm  
Like hoarse-tongued blare of martial brass  
Rebukes the lingerers. A wild cry is heard  
In semblance of the trumpet's billowy sound.  
Then comes the raging charge: their little wings  
Glitter, their stings are sharp as javelins.  
They grapple limb with limb, and round each chief,  
Each king's pavilion, there is tug of war,  
As with fierce war-cry each defies the foe.  
In such wise, when some rainless day in Spring  
Invites them to the open fields, they burst  
Impetuous from their portals, and the bees  
Join battle high in air; a mighty din  
Arises; they roll up confusedly  
In one great globe, then drop they headlong down;  
Not thicker is the fall of wind-blown hail  
Nor shower of acorns from storm-shaken tree.  
The chieftains in the midmost war are known  
By their far-shining wings and show abroad  
How vast a valor such small breasts contain;  
So stubbornly they hold their ground, until  
The mightier victor of this host or that  
Compels to panic flight his routed foe.  
Yet all this stir of passion and fierce fight,



If but a little dust be tossed in air,  
Will be subdued, dispersed, and die away.

But when the two chief captains homeward come  
From conduct of the war, the vanquished one  
Must be condemned to die, lest he should waste  
The public substance. Let the victor take  
An undisputed throne. One now shines forth  
In golden flecked attire; of race diverse  
The twain appear, one strong and flourishing,  
Of haughty looks and bright with crimson scales,  
The other in foul garb inglorious  
Drags slothfully his swollen bulk along.  
And like their kings their followers also prove  
Of differing kind: some foul and colorless  
As dust-cloud on a highway, such as chokes  
The thirsty traveller; but the others flash  
With glittering beams and wear a glow of fire,  
Their backs all blazoned with bright drops of gold.  
This is the nobler breed; from these when heaven  
Brings the due season round thou shalt obtain  
Sweet honey, and not only sweet but clear, —  
A mellowing mixture if the wine be strong.

But when the swarm flits aimless through the air  
Heeds not its honied treasure, and would soar  
Free of the cool hives, in such idle play  
Thy art must govern their inconstant mind.  
The task is easy. Thou hast but to clip  
The leaders' wings; for when these lag below  
No common bee will soar aloft, nor dare

Give marching orders to the bivouac.  
Then gardens with the breath of saffron flowers  
Tempt them to linger, where 'gainst birds and thieves  
With willow scythe the god of Hellespont,  
Priapus, is a faithful sentinel.  
Then the bee-keeper from the lofty hills  
Must fetch pine boughs and thyme leaves, scattering  
both  
All round the hives; and with his own strong hand  
Set out fine, healthy plants, and guide the flow  
Of friendly streams to bless his garden ground.

But truly, if I were not reefing sail  
Nor ending now a long, laborious voyage,  
And were I less in haste to beach my keel,  
Perchance I could make venture of a song  
On gardens and the skill to make them bloom: —  
How Paestum's roses twice a year unfold,  
How endives flourish in a trickling rill,  
Parsley at brookside green, and rambling gourds  
Thrust forth their rounded bellies through the grass.  
Then would I of that tardy loiterer tell,  
Narcissus, of th' acanthus' nodding stem,  
Of ivies pale, and pathways bordered green  
With myrtle.

For beneath Oebalia's towers  
Where dark Galaesus flows through golden corn,  
I once made friendship of an aged man  
From Corycus, who had a few poor roods  
Of worthless land. No pasturage was there  
For cattle nor for flocks convenient food,

Nor soil for vines. Yet he among its thorns  
Raised his small plot of greens and round them sowed  
A few white lilies, vervain's sacred leaf,  
With poppies of rare savor, while his soul  
Vied with the wealth of kings, when late at eve  
He heaped th' unpurchased banquet on his board.  
The rose of Spring and autumn's apples red  
He was the first to pluck. When winter's chill  
Still split the rocks with frost and laid cold curb  
Upon the frozen stream, already he  
Was toying with some soft-tressed hyacinth,  
Chiding slow summer and the laggard Spring.  
He was, be sure, the first whose brooding bees  
Were in full swarm; his fingers earliest  
Pressed forth the bubbling honey from the comb.  
Lime-trees he planted and luxuriant pines,  
And what his fruit trees in the blossoming Spring  
Of promise bore, not less rich autumn gave.  
His elm-tree saplings even when full-grown  
He could transplant, or pear-trees big and strong,  
Or the young plane-tree when its spreading boughs  
Screened from the sun the guest that drank his wine.  
Yet all these joys I lack full space to sing.  
Let later singers the sweet story tell.

Come then, give ear, while I those gifts declare  
Which bees received of Jove, when for such boon  
They, following where the clash of cymbals called  
And that wild chant the Cretan priesthood sang,  
In Dicte's cave fed heaven's infant king.  
They are the only creatures to possess

Offspring in common, and their city build  
Of undivided houses, where they live  
Obeying mighty laws, and they alone  
True fatherland and fixed abodes obtain.  
Warned of approaching winter, they employ  
Their summer's day in toil, and store their gains  
As common treasure. Certain chosen ones  
Forage for food and, so it is agreed,  
Keep busy in the fields while others pent  
Within the walls of houses, firmly mould  
The bottom of the comb; for which they use  
Narcissus' tear and gums from bark of trees,  
Then roof with clinging wax. Others lead forth  
Their infant brood in air, the tribe to be.  
Still others closely pack the honey-dew,  
Till every cell with nectared sweet runs o'er.  
For others 'tis th' apportioned task to stand  
Gate-sentinels, and keep alternate watch  
For auguries of rain and cloudy skies.  
These at the gates receive the little loads  
Of the home-comers, or lined up for war,  
Fight the dull drones and bar them from the hive.  
Eager the toil and swift. The honey-comb  
Breathes to the air sweet fragrance of wild thyme.

It minds me of the Cyclops' wondrous task,  
When from the molten mass of yielding ore  
They forge their thunderbolts: a certain part  
Force bull's-hide bellows to puff back and forth  
The windy blasts; part temper in deep pool  
The hissing metal; with their anvil's weight

The floor of Aetna groans; their lifted arms  
With power gigantic strike the measured blows,  
And with huge pincers gripping on the steel  
They roll it round. With not less furious toil,  
If such small creatures may with large compare,  
The bees upon Hymettus' hill divine  
Rush to their labors, mightily compelled  
By inborn love of riches, each pursuing  
His separate task and gain. The oldest ones  
Take counsel for their city, raising walls  
About the honied treasure, or build up  
Ingenious dwellings; but the younger sort  
Come late at eve and weary, bringing home  
Thigh-loads of flowery food. They travel far  
Feeding on arbuté or the silvery bloom  
Of willows, or on blushing crocuses,  
Or fruitful limes and deep-dyed hyacinth.  
But all together seek repose or toil  
At the same hours. When morning's ray appears  
They hurry from the gates, not one delays.  
But when the star of twilight lifts in heaven  
Its monitory beam, all homeward fly,  
Quitting the forage of the plain, to find  
Safe shelter and to ease their wearied limbs.  
Loud is the air when the returning swarm  
Hums round the hive; but later, when they lie  
Each in his chamber, then the silence falls  
And shadows of the night, while welcome sleep  
Possesses all. But if the opening morn  
Show dark and rainy skies, they fly not far  
From house and home, nor venture high in air



If tempests threaten, but in safety rove  
Close to their city walls, and seek supply  
Of water, taking but a brief detour.  
Sometimes they lift small pebbles, as light boats  
Bear ballast through the waves; and weighted so,  
They keep their balanced flight through stormful air.

But veriest marvel of the ways of bees  
Is that their limbs mix not in love's embrace  
Nor weaken them by lust, nor ever bear  
Their young in pangs of travail; but from leaves  
Of fragrant herbs the mothers with their lips  
Breathe in their offspring, and all virginal  
Give birth to kings and tiny citizens,  
Repeopling so their waxen state and throne.  
Often they wound on flinty rocks their wings  
And faithful to their burdens bravely die.  
Such zeal they have for flowers, and in their life  
Of honey-gathering such sweet glory find.

Thus though each single life has narrow bound,  
But seven summers, no more, the race of bees  
Lives on immortally. Age after age  
Their noble line is blest and counts its roll  
Of a long multitude of sires of sires.  
But to their kings the fealty they pay  
Not Egypt nor the Lydian monarchy  
Surpass, not Parthia nor the golden Mede  
Beside Hydaspes' wave. For when their king  
Securely stands, a common thought and soul  
Fills all the host; but if the chieftain fall

All loyal bonds are snapt, and their own rage  
Tears down the toil-built honey and destroys  
The waxen treasure-house. The king defends  
Their work, their wealth; while they his state surround  
With honor and applause, and at his side  
Attend him in loud-shouting, loyal throng.  
They lift him on their shoulders; or in war  
Fling their own bodies in his foeman's way,  
Seeking by many a wound a glorious death.

These acts and powers observing, some declare  
That bees have portion in the mind of God  
And life from heaven derive; that God pervades  
All lands, the ocean's plain, th' abyss of heaven,  
And that from him flocks, cattle, princely men,  
All breeds of creatures wild, receive at birth  
Each his frail, vital breath; that whence they came  
All turn again, dissolving; so that death  
Is nowhere found, but vital essences  
Upsoaring in the vast, o'er-vaulted sky  
Move unextinguished through the starry throng.

If e'er thou wouldst from its small shelf unseal  
The honied store, first having purified  
Thy lips and breath, with water sprinkle well  
And waft the wreathing smoke with wave of hand.  
Twice in the year the teeming brood is born,  
Two harvests have they: when the Pleiad star  
Spurns with her wingèd feet the ocean's rim,  
And when in flight before the stormful sign  
Of the great Fish, on journey dark and drear

She sinks from heaven beneath the wintry wave.  
This is the season when the wrath of bees  
Breaks bound, and if one harm them, they infuse  
A venom in each sting and in thy veins  
Implant a hidden barb, leaving behind  
Their own lives in the little wounds they give.  
If a hard winter bodes, and thy fond care  
Forecasts their future, pitying what would be  
Thy spirit-broken swarm's distressful state,  
Fear not to smoke them out with odorous thyme  
And cut the empty combs. Haply some newt  
Has bored the wax unseen, or in the cells  
The sunbeam-fearing beetles throng, or they  
Who sit at unearned feasts, the shirking drones.  
Or some rude hornet with his mightier sting  
Has forced his way, or moth of dreadful breed,  
Or spider, by Minerva curst, has hung  
Her swinging webs at entrance of the hives.  
The more the bees feel poverty, the more  
They turn to eager labors and retrieve  
A fallen people's fortune, heaping high  
Their crowded marts and flowery granaries.

But if it chance, because the life of bees  
Has the same ills as ours, that their small frames  
Languish in pestilence, these certain signs  
Will tell thee of their plight: the stricken ones  
Keep changing color and their visages  
Are hideously wasted; then the tribe  
Bears slowly from its house the lifeless forms  
With mournful pomp of death; or clinging close

With interwoven feet they swing aloft  
Above their threshold, or with portals barred  
Linger within the walls, all spiritless  
With hunger and benumbed with shrivelling cold.  
Then sounds a deeper voice, a booming note  
Ever increasing, as when north winds roar  
In wintry woods, or when a roughened sea  
Flows moaning from the shore, or when swift fires  
Leap, loud and strong behind shut furnace doors.  
Burn at such time the sweet-breathed galbanum.  
Carry them honey poured in pipes of reed  
Tempting them thus to feed and calling them  
To the familiar feast. 'Tis also well  
To flavor it with sap of powdered galls  
And rose-leaves dried, or freshly trodden must  
Warmed at a fire, or raisin-clusters plucked  
From some choice vineyard; also leaves of thyme,  
The Attic sort, and that strong-scented stem  
The Centaurs knew. Then there's a useful flower  
Growing in meadows, which the country folk  
Call star-wort, not a blossom hard to find,  
For its large cluster lifts itself in air  
Out of one root; its central orb is gold  
But it wears petals in a numerous ring  
Of glossy purplish blue; 'tis often laid  
In twisted garlands at some holy shrine.  
Bitter its taste; the shepherds gather it  
In valley-pastures where the winding streams  
Of Mella flow. The roots of this steeped well  
In hot, high-flavored wine, thou may'st set down  
At the hive door in baskets heaping full.

But if thy whole swarm at a stroke should fail  
With no stock left for breeding, let my song  
Tell now a memorable art derived  
From an Arcadian king, and show what way  
When bulls are slaughtered oftentimes their blood  
Out of corruption generates the bee. .  
From ancient lore I will the tale unfold.  
For where Canopus' favored citizens  
Beneath the Macedonian's golden sway  
By the full, lingering waters of the Nile,  
Sail o'er their farms in painted skiffs (though oft  
The Persian bowmen vex the borderland)  
And where in seven floods the rushing stream  
Divides, and feeds the green Egyptian field  
With that rich earth the river downward draws  
From where the dark-skinned Aethiopians roam —  
Throughout that famous land their opulent ease  
Depends upon this art.

First they choose out  
Some place of narrow bounds, and roofing o'er  
With tiles, building around it straitened walls,  
They cut four windows open to four winds,  
But not square to the sun. Then from the herd  
They take a steer, a two-year-old, whose horns  
Just curl upon his brows; his nostrils twain  
And breathing mouth, though stoutly he resist,  
They seal fast; then with rain of many blows  
They beat his life out, crushing every part  
Except th' unbroken hide. The body then  
Is laid in the enclosure; under it  
They scatter boughs, the fragrant leaves of thyme



And cassia freshly pulled. This must be done  
When first the Spring winds set the waters free,  
Before the meadows blush with early flowers  
Or ere the chattering swallow hangs her nest  
Under the roof-tree beam. Soon waxing warm  
The moisture rises in the softened bones,  
And living creatures, wonderful to see,  
Come forth, at first all footless, but erelong  
With whir of wings the restless multitude  
In swelling numbers on the liquid air,  
Bursts swift away; like some full, pouring shower  
From summer cloud, or like the arrowy rain  
From a loud, quivering bowstring skyward flung,  
When Parthia's light-foot host invites the war.

What god, O Muses, labored to devise  
This art for us, or how did human skill  
Unto such novel venture find a way ?  
The shepherd Aristaeus climbing forth  
From Tempe's vale and river, having lost,  
So runs the tale, his swarms of bees, and vexed  
With fever and with famine, stood all tears  
Hard by the sacred source of Peneus' wave,  
And making loud complaint and bitter cry,  
Called thus: " Cyrene, mother mine, whose home  
Is deep below this stream, why bor'st thou me  
Of famous, heavenly line (if I may claim  
Apollo, lord of Thymbra, for my sire,  
As thou hast said) yet gav'st me birth  
To be of fate the scorn ? Where hast thou flung  
Thy love of me away ? Why bid aspire  
To heaven and godhead ? Look, my life as man

Has lost its pride and crown, its busy care  
Of field and flock, with many a patient proof,  
So painfully achieved. And yet thou wert  
My mother! Therefore come! Let thine own hand  
Spoil and uproot my fruitful orchards fair,  
Hurl fire on my folds, my harvest blight,  
Burn up my seedlings and with ruthless axe  
My vineyards hew away! — if verily  
Such scorn thou hast of all that brings me praise.”  
Now from her chamber deep below the wave  
His mother heard his voice. Her nymphs hard by  
Sat in a circle spinning from their looms  
Rare fleeces dipped in hues of hyaline:  
Ligea, Xantho, with Phyllodoce  
And Drymo, o’er whose snowy necks flowed down  
Their gleaming hair, Cydippe and gold-tressed  
Lycorias, the one a virgin free.  
The other to the labors lately come  
Of motherhood; there were the sisters twain  
Clio and Beroe, ocean’s daughters both,  
In golden zone and gorgeous mantles clad;  
Deiopea, Opis, Ephyre  
And fleet-foot Arethusa, who at last  
Had laid her arrows by. This sea-nymph throng  
Was listening to the tales of Clymene:  
Of Vulcan’s fruitless caution and the guile  
Of amorous Mars that gained him stolen joy;  
And of unnumbered loves of gods she told,  
Since first the world began. So while their hands  
Twirled from the spindles the soft threads of wool,  
They heard th’ enchanting burden of her song.

But once again upon his mother's ear  
Smote Aristaeus' cry, and those sea-nymphs  
Listened amazed upon their crystal thrones.  
Then Arethusa, ere her sisters spoke,  
Uplifting from the wave her golden brow,  
Thus called from far: "Cyrene, sister mine,  
Hear not in vain that terrifying cry.  
Behold thy darling and thy chiefest care,  
Unhappy Aristaeus, stands in tears  
On brink of Peneus' wave, and on thy name  
Calls loud to tell thee of thy cruelty."  
Once more the mother with unwonted fear  
Trembled at heart: "Oh, hither where we dwell  
Show him his way," she said, "Grant him the boon  
To cross yon threshold of divine abodes."  
Straightway she gave command that far and wide  
The opening river floods should yield free path  
To the young shepherd's feet. And lo! the waves  
Rose like a hilltop round him and received  
In vast embrace, letting the hero pass  
Deep down below the river. Now his eyes  
Gazed wondering on his goddess-mother's realm.  
He passed through watery kingdoms, by dark lakes  
All cavern-girdled, by loud-roaring groves.  
Then by the noise of mighty floods struck dumb  
He saw vast rivers flowing under earth  
Each in its region due. The Phasis there  
And Lycus he could see, and that first well  
Whence breaks to birth Enipeus' stream profound.  
There Father Tiber rose, and Anio's  
Swift current, rock-bound, echoing Hypanis,

Caicus, Mysia's stream; there golden-horned,  
His countenance a bull, Eridanus  
That with more fury than all floods beside  
Sweeps through rich farms to meet the purple sea.

Soon came the youth beneath the pendent stone  
That roofed his mother's halls. Cyrene saw  
Her son's unfruitful tears. Her sisters brought,  
In order due, ablution for his hands  
And napkins of shorn fringe; they piled the board  
With feasting and with wine-cups oft refilled.  
The sacred altars blazed with fragrant fires.  
The mother cried: "Bring forth a brimming bowl  
Of Lydian vintage. We make offering  
Unto the ocean's god." Wherewith she prayed  
To ocean the great parent, and the nymphs:  
A hundred haunt the groves, a hundred guard  
The rivers, and they are her sisters all.  
Three times on Vesta's burning hearth she poured  
A stream of wine, three times the vanquished fire  
Leaped sparkling to the roof-tree in fresh flame.  
The happy omen cheered her fearful mind  
And thus she spoke:

"In far Carpathian main  
The sea-green Proteus dwells, a prophet-bard.  
Whose dolphin chariot skims the mighty deep  
With yoke of two-foot horses. At this hour  
Back to his own Emathian shores he hies,  
His fatherland Pallene. We sea-nymphs  
And gray-beard Nereus greatly worship him.  
For he, prophetic soul, has vision clear

Of all that is and was and soon will be.  
The power is Neptune's gift, at whose command  
He, under rolling tides, the shepherd is  
Of monster flocks and of foul-featured seals.  
'Tis he, my son, whom thou must bind with cords  
Then will he show what brought thy plagues to pass  
And grant escape. No precept will he give  
Save on compulsion; thou canst not persuade  
By prayers. Take him by violence and bind  
Strong fetters round his limbs, until at last  
Thou shalt dissolve his vain, deceiving spells.  
Myself at noon's full blaze, when all the fields  
Are thirsting and the flocks in shadows lie,  
Will lead thee where this aged prophet hides  
When weary of the sea. Thou, while he sleeps,  
Seize on him with firm hand and fetters strong.  
His changeful shapes will mock thee; he will wear  
The forms of many a beast: he will appear  
A bristling boar, a tiger grim, a snake  
Of scaly coils, a red-necked lioness;  
Or he will seem a sound of crackling fire  
And through thy fetters leap, or suddenly  
Drop like fast-flowing water from thy grasp.  
But thou the more he shifts, the more he flies  
From form to form, bind thou the cords, my son,  
Yet tighter, till at last thine eyes behold  
The self-same shape his changeful body wore  
When with closed eyes he first lay down and slept."  
She spoke: and round her breathed the fragrant air  
Of her immortal nature, which did flow  
Over her son's whole body, from his head



His ordered tresses shed an effluence  
Divinely sweet, and through his manly limbs  
New vigor flowed.

A cavern vast  
Lies in a certain mountain's hollowed side,  
Where driven by the winds the swollen waves  
Draw back divided, and where many a time  
The storm-caught mariners safe shelter find.  
Deep in its gloom behind a barrier stone  
Lay Proteus. There the sea-nymph set her son  
In shadowy ambush far from light of day,  
But she herself, all mantled in a cloud,  
Watched at a distance. 'Twas the season when  
The fierce Dog Star that burns the fevered Ind  
Flamed in the sky, and half the orb of heaven  
The fiery sun had passed. The pastures green  
Were withered, the dry-throated rivers ran  
Emptied, and their warm beds of oozy clay  
Lay parching in the sunshine. Proteus then  
Out of the billowy seas had sought repose  
Within his wonted cavern. Round him ranged  
The watery tribes that habit the great sea,  
In frolic shaking off the bitter brine  
Like showers of dew; far-scattered on the shore  
Were stretched the sleeping seals. The god himself  
Seemed like the herdsman in the hills, what time  
The evening star leads back from field to fold  
His cattle and his flock; his bleating lambs  
Tempt the far-listening wolves — he takes his place  
On some tall stone and counts them as they pass.

Now Aristaeus, his occasion come,  
Soon as the old man's weary limbs took rest,  
Rushed in upon him with a mighty cry  
And bound him as he lay. The struggling god  
Forgot not his own arts, and changed himself  
Into all wondrous things: to flames of fire,  
To frightful monsters and swift-passing streams.  
But when for all his guile he could not flee,  
Yielding, he took his own true shape, and spake  
From human lips this answer: "At whose word,  
Com'st thou my dwelling nigh, presumptuous boy?  
What wouldst thou have?" The other answered him:  
"Thou knowest, Proteus, knowest all untold.  
What scapes thy knowledge? Prithee now give o'er!  
By word divine I come, and ask of thee  
Some oracle to help my desperate need."

He ceased. At last the prophet overborne  
By much constraint, rolled wide his blazing eyes  
And glances dark, gnashed terribly his teeth  
And from his lips the words of fate set free.  
"None less than wrathful god pursues thee thus.  
For dire offences is thy suffering paid.  
'Tis Orpheus, woe-begone, but guiltless all,  
Sends thee his vengeance until fate oppose;  
For mighty is his anger evermore  
Robbed of his wife. It was thy chase she fled  
Swift through the stream, but saw not in her path  
The huge snake hiding on the deep-grassed shore, —  
Doomed girl! The forest-nymphs, her lovely peers,  
To the high hilltops sent their wailing cry;

The peaks of Rhodope lamented loud,  
Lofty Pangaea, and the land of Thrace  
Beloved of Mars; swift Hebrus flowed in tears  
And Orithya wept. But he, the bard  
Soothed his love-anguish on the concave shell,  
Singing of thee, sweet wife, and wandering lone  
Upon a desolate shore. Of thee he sang  
When morning rose and with departing day.  
He entered also at the doors of hell,  
At Pluto's vast abode, that clouded grove  
Black with eternal horror. He drew near  
Those fleshless ghosts and Hades' grisly king,  
Whose hearts at human prayers no motion feel.  
Yet at his song, from deepest Erebus  
The lifeless phantoms and thin shadows came,  
Loving and pitiful; like flocks they seemed  
Of birds that hide in leafy boughs, when night  
Or wintry tempest drives them from the hills.  
Mothers and husbands came, with lifeless forms  
Of high-souled heroes, boys, unwedded maids,  
And youthful manhood given to the tomb  
Before fond parents' eyes. Around them flowed  
Cocytus, dark with slime and loathly weed.  
An odious fen is there, a dull, dark pool,  
And Styx, nine times infolded hems them round.  
Yet even the inmost house of death and hell  
Listened in wonder, and th' Eumenides  
With serpent-wreathèd hair. Fell Cerberus  
Held his three mouths agape. The windy wheel  
That tortures lost Ixion ceased to roll.

Now homeward turning, Orpheus had escaped  
These perils manifold; Eurydice,  
His own once more, was climbing back to life,  
But following far behind her spouse, for so  
Proserpina had said. But, ere he knew,  
A sudden madness seized the lover's mind —  
A fault to be forgiven, could hell forgive.  
For when the first clear sunbeam smote her brow,  
He, heedless, ah! and his resolves undone,  
Paused, looking backward on Eurydice.  
Then all his work was nothing, for the law  
Of death's grim king was broken. Then three times  
Loud thunders o'er Avernus' waters rolled.

'Orpheus,' she cried, 'what madness this, that slays  
My wretched self and thee? Oh, once again  
They call me back, the unrelenting powers.  
Sleep falls upon my fading sight. Farewell!  
Deep night is round me and I drift away,  
No longer thine, alas! but lifting thee  
My helpless hands.'

She spake and suddenly  
Sank from his sight, like cloudy smoke that fades  
And flies away mingling with viewless air.  
He stood, a shadow grasping, and would fain  
Speak to her o'er and o'er; but after this  
She saw him not. The Stygian boatman gave  
No second passage o'er his barrier stream.

What could he more attempt, or whither flee,  
Of such a bride twice robbed? What bitter cry

Can reach the realm of death, or mournful voice  
Move the infernal powers ? What was she now  
But shadow cold, on Stygian shallop borne ?  
So he, while seven whole months went by, they say,  
Beneath the windy crags and by the shores  
Of solitary Strymon weeping strayed,  
To caverns cold his sorrows numbering o'er  
In music that made tigers tame and lured  
The rugged oaks to follow.

Even so

In poplar shades the mournful nightingale  
Her stolen brood bewails, which cruel hands  
Have found, and pulled all naked from her nest.  
The livelong night she cries, and on one bough  
Renews the doleful story, far and wide  
Filling the forest with complaint and woe.

His heart could love no more; no spousals new  
His purpose changed. In solitude he roved  
Far north through frozen fields and Scythian snows,  
O'er mountain steeps that wear perpetual cold,  
Lamenting loud his lost Eurydice  
And Pluto's favors vain. His faithful grief  
Angered those Thracian maids whose kiss he scorned,  
As madly through Cithaeron's echoing vales  
Their bacchanalian, midnight revel sped.  
When they had torn the lover limb from limb  
And hurled him piecemeal o'er the fields, even then  
As Hebrus' rolling current swept along  
His head, from white neck rent away, its voice,  
Its death-cold tongue, cried forth 'Eurydice!'



The parting breath sighed 'Poor Eurydice!'  
'Eurydice!' the sounding shores replied."

Thus Proteus' tale had end; and with a leap  
He plunged him in the sea and where he plunged  
Tossed up the wave-crest into whirling foam.  
Not so Cyrene, she before he asked,  
Unto her trembling son this counsel gave:  
"Now may thy heart, dear son, put by its pain.  
The plague had this one cause: it was the nymphs  
With whom in lofty groves she tripped along,  
That sent thy swarms of bees such hapless end.  
Go offer gifts. Uplift the suppliant hand  
And pray the gentle wood-nymphs to forgive.  
Soon will they pardon and thine offering heed,  
Letting their anger die. But in what form  
To make petition, I will first unroll.  
Four noble bulls surpassing large and strong  
Who now are pastured on the uplands green  
Of this Lycaean hill, these shalt thou choose;  
And with them take as many heifers fair  
Whose necks no yoke has touched. Build then  
Four altars at the wood-nymphs' favored shrine  
And let the sacred streams of blood run down  
From throats of victims slain; but leave behind  
Their lifeless bodies in the leafy grove.  
When after these things the ninth morn is come,  
Pay funeral sacrifice in Orpheus' name  
And with oblivion's poppies garland o'er,  
Slaying a black-fleeced sheep. Then to the grove  
Return, and to th' appeased Eurydice  
Make thankful offering of a heifer slain."

No tarrying now! But straightway he fulfilled  
His mother's words. He sought the favored shrine  
And raised the wood-nymphs the four altars due.  
Four noble bulls surpassing large and strong,  
Four unyoked heifers brought he; afterward  
When the ninth morn had risen, then he paid  
The sacrifice to Orpheus, and retraced  
His footsteps to the grove. There suddenly  
Men saw a wonder passing strange: the sides  
Of the slain cattle, now turned soft, buzzed loud  
With swarming bees; the belly and the ribs  
Were teeming; and the bees in formless clouds  
Streamed upward to a tree-top, and hung down  
In pointed cluster from the swinging bough.

Thus have I made my songs of well-kept farms,  
Of flocks withal and trees, while Caesar's power  
Was launching the vast thunder of his war  
Over the deep Euphrates, publishing  
By conquest his supreme and just decrees  
Unto the grateful nations, taking so  
His pathway to the gods. The selfsame days  
I, Virgil, passed in sweet Parthenope,  
Busied and blest in unrenowned repose,  
I that erewhile, when youthful blood was bold  
Played with the shepherd's muse, and made my song  
Of Tityrus beneath the beech-tree's shade.



# THE ECLOGUES





## ECLOGUE I

MELIBOEUS, TITYRUS

M. In the wide-branching beech-trees' shade reclined  
Thou, Tityrus, playst on thy slender reed  
A shepherd song. I from my fatherland,  
My fatherland and pastures ever dear,  
To exile fly, while Tityrus at ease  
In cooling shadows bids the woodland sing  
Of lovely Amaryllis.

T. 'Twas a god,  
O Meliboeus, gave these idle hours,  
One of my gods forever. A young lamb,  
From my full folds a thankful offering,  
Shall oft his altar stain. For it was he  
Gave yonder herds their leave to roam so far,  
And me to play whatever song I will  
On sylvan pipes the happy, livelong day.

M. I feel no envy, yet my wonder wakes;  
For in this region, lo, from end to end  
There's trouble stirring. See me sick at heart  
Prodding my she-goats on. Look Tityrus,  
This one I scarce can move. A few hours gone,  
Nigh yonder hazel coppices, she dropped  
Two kids, the promise of my flock, and then  
Having borne, left them on the stony ground.  
Oh! more than once, — but my poor wits were blind —  
The heaven-blasted oak this loss foretold,

And boding raven shrieked from hollow tree.

✓ But, Tityrus, who is this god of thine ?

T. That city, Meliboeus, men call Rome  
I, silly shepherd, pictured should appear  
Like yonder little walls and towers, whereto  
We drive so oft our tender weanlings down.  
For pups are like the bitch, <sup>and kids</sup> and kids, I knew,  
Are moulded like their dam; so what is small  
I would with large compare. But of a truth  
That city lifts above all else her crown  
Far as the cypress o'er the hedge-row thorn.

M. What urgent errand gave thee sight of Rome ?

T. My freedom. For a late-won freedom smiled  
On slack and slothful me, though in that year  
I saw my clipped-off beard fall silver gray.  
Yet smile she did, and my long hopes fulfilled,  
When Amaryllis reigned and I was quit  
Of Galatea. For I now confess  
That Galatea's lover had no dream  
Of freedom, nor a thought for thrift and gain.  
Although sleek cattle of my folds were sold  
For sacrifice, and from my presses cheese,  
Cheese of the best, went to the thankless town,  
Still I came always empty-handed home.

M. Oft would I wonder on what powers divine  
Fair Amaryllis so forlornly called,  
And for what lover her ripe apples hung  
Ungathered on the tree. Our Tityrus  
Was far away, and yonder groves of pine,  
The flowing fountains and the orchards green  
Sighed after Tityrus.



To Crete and swift Oaxes' tumbling stream,  
Or Britain's people sundered from the world.  
Oh! shall I ever after seasons gone  
See my own country more, my cabin rude  
With high-peaked roof of turf? Or if I see  
Hereafter realms once mine, must I be shocked  
At scanty blades of corn? And will there be  
Some godless soldier on my well-tilled farm,  
Some grim barbarian, gathering its yield?  
Oh, to what woes has civil discord led  
Our wretched countrymen! For whom to reap  
Were these fair acres sown? What profit now  
My grafted pear-trees and my trellised vine?  
Move on, dear flock, whose happy days are done!  
My mother-goats, move on! No more shall I  
Reclined in cool, green cave behold from far  
How on the bush-grown crag you cling and climb.  
No shepherd-songs for me! I shall not lead  
My feeding mother-goats to get their fill  
Of clover-buds or willow's bitter stem.

- T. Yet enter here and take tonight thy rest,  
Sound-sleeping on my pallet of fresh green.  
Ripe chestnuts are within, full mellowed fruits  
And curds in plenty. Look! The smoke ascends  
From each thatched roof-top in the lowland vale,  
And widening shadows from the mountains fall.

## ECLOGUE II

### ALEXIS

The shepherd Corydon with ardent sigh  
Sued fair Alexis, favorite of his lord,  
But ne'er his hopes obtained. He could but roam  
Day after day where many beech trees wave  
Their shadowing crests, and lonely and forlorn  
There flung abroad on listening hills and groves  
His fruitless passion in this random song:

Cruel Alexis, deaf to what I sing,  
Hast thou no pity on me? Thou wilt be  
My death at last. Now at the noon-tide hour  
My flocks take shelter in the cooling shade,  
Now the green lizards hide in hedge-row thorn;  
For reapers wearied by the sultry sun  
Good Thestylis now mixes savory store  
Of garlic, thyme and leaves of fragrant rue;  
But where I seek my love, the copses dry  
Fill all the burning air with insect-songs.

Were it not better to have borne the scorn  
Of haughty Amaryllis and the tears  
Her anger knew, or met Menalcas' frown,  
Though swarthy he, as thou art white and fair?  
O lovely youth, trust not the outward show  
Too far! White hawthorn fades, when hyacinths  
Are woven in dark garlands. Thy proud looks



Despise me, and of my estate and name  
Seek not to know — how rich in herds I be,  
What flowing milk I get, and how I own  
Wide-pastured o'er the slopes of Sicily  
A thousand ewes; their sweet, fresh milk is mine  
In parching summer and the wintry cold.  
I can sing also: with a song like mine  
Loud-voiced Amphion on Boeotia's plain  
Gathered his herd from far-off Aracynth.  
Nor think me quite uncomely! By the shore  
Where the sea lay untroubled by the breeze,  
I saw my mirrored shape one day; nor fear,  
Even in thine eyes, to rival Daphnis' mould,  
If such a glass be true.

Oh, that thy heart  
Were willing to abide in lowly thatch  
Upon a poor man's simple farm, piercing with shafts  
The antlered stag, or driving kids along  
With a green mallow wand, while taught of me  
Thy wood-notes should repeat the songs of Pan!  
For how to knit with wax the numbered reeds  
'Twas Pan first showed us, Pan whose faithful care  
Is over sheep and shepherd. Scorn not then  
To press thy soft lip to a sylvan reed.  
Amyntas sued to learn these stops in vain.  
My pipe is made of seven jointed stems  
Of hemlock! 'Twas Damoetas gave it me;  
He whispered as he died, "It now is thine,  
"And thou, its second master." So Damoetas.  
Stupid Amyntas heard with envious heart.  
Then too I have a pair of roe-bucks here,

Once rescued from a perilous ravine,  
Still dappled white; they're suckled twice a day;  
Freely I offer these, though Thestylis  
Begs often she may have them for her own.  
And soon she shall, if in thy haughty eyes  
My gifts be scorned.

Come hither, loveliest boy!

The wood-nymphs bear thee lilies heaping high  
In osier baskets; and a naiad white  
Plucking pale violets and poppies tall,  
Wreaths, scented fennel with narcissus bloom,  
And lavender with all sweet herbs she binds,  
And bids sad-vestured hyacinth look gay  
Mated with sprays of saffron marigold.  
I'll pluck thee apricots of velvet skin,  
And chestnuts such as Amaryllis loved,  
And waxen plums to top my basket well —  
An honored fruit. And O ye laurels green,  
Ye myrtles set near by, I cull ye both,  
That thus your mingled breaths may sweeter be!

Ah, Corydon, poor clown! Alexis laughs  
At gifts of thine; and if by gifts we woo,  
Iollas will outvie me. Woe is me!  
What curses have I drawn upon this head?  
I bade the northwind o'er my garden blow,  
And let the wild boar foul my crystal spring.  
Whom dost thou scorn, mad boy! The gods themselves  
Have dwelt in woodland shades, and there did roam  
Paris, the prince of Troy. Though Pallas bless  
The towered citadels herself did build,

Dearer than they to us our woods and wilds.  
The bloody lioness a wolf pursues; the wolf, a goat;  
The frisking goat runs where fresh clover blooms;  
So, O Alexis, Corydon seeks thee.  
Its sweetest pleasure leads each creature on.

Ah see! The oxen drag the ploughshare home  
Point upward toward the yoke. The setting sun,  
Doubles the lengthening shadows. But yet still,  
Still in my heart love not less fiercely burns.  
What ending has love's day? Ah, Corydon,  
What madness has deluded Corydon?  
O'er yonder elms thy grape-vine runs untrimmed.  
Busy thyself with what thy needs require,  
Weaving a basket of soft twigs and straw;  
And if Alexis frown, turn thou elsewhere!

## ECLOGUE III

MENALCAS, DAMOETAS, PALAEMON

- M. Whose is the flock, Damoetas ? Meliboeus' ?  
D. No, Aegon's. He has put it in my charge.  
M. O luckless flock! For while their owner woos  
Neaera, fearing she may love me best,  
This hireling fellow twice an hour milks off  
The ewes; the flock is lean; the lambs go dry.  
D. A little less abuse of grown men, please!  
We know who 'twas when the goats peered around,  
And where the covert when the light nymphs laughed.  
M. The very day, no doubt, when I was seen  
In Micon's garden slashing the young vines  
With wicked knife.  
D. Or when in beechen grove  
Thou brok'st in pieces Daphnis' pipes and bow,  
Because to fairer youth thou knewst them given,  
And rather wouldst have died than missed that wrong.  
M. What can a master do 'gainst such bold thieves ?  
Did I not see thee setting traps to snare,  
Rascal! that goat of Damon's, while his hound  
Barked clamorous and long ? But when I cried,  
" Call the flock home, my Tityrus! What trick  
" Is that thief playing ?" thou didst cringe and cower  
Down in the sedge.  
D. I vanquished him in song.  
Should he not pay me what my piping won ?

That goat ? Whate'er you say, the goat was mine. Damon himself confessed it, but declared He could not let him go.

M.   Thou vanquish him  
In rival song ? When were the waxbound pipes  
Ever thine own, thou dabster, who dost play  
At common cross-roads to the gaping clowns,  
On squeaky fife thy despicable strain ?

D. Darest thou match me ? Thou and I to prove  
Each his own music in responsive song ?  
I stake this heifer. Think her no small prize.  
She yields milk twice a day and twice gives suck.  
I'll risk her. What's thy stake to strive with me ?

M. I may not from the flock my wager choose.  
At home my father and his niggard wife  
Count the sheep twice each day, and he, the goats.  
But something better, as thyself wilt own,  
Shall be my gage—if this mad match thou darest—  
Two cups of beechwood, which with heavenly skill  
Alcimedon once carved. About each cup  
The cunning tool has shaped a slender vine  
With wandering clusters of pale ivy wound,  
And in the midst two figures, Conon's one,  
And his—who was it?—that with studious wand  
Pictured the vault of heaven for all mankind,  
Showing both seed-time and the reaper's star.  
My lips have touched them not; they lie in store.

D. Alcimedon shaped me two cups as well,  
The handles looped with soft acanthus leaves.  
Lo, Orpheus in the midst holds forth his lyre;  
Th' obedient forests follow where he sings.



- My lips have touched them not; they lie in store.  
But 'gainst my heifer, cups be paltry things.
- M. Thou 'lt not escape today! I 'll match with thee  
On any terms thou wilt. And for a judge,  
Look, here's Palaemon coming! What I do,  
Will cool, I think, thy itch for challenging.
- D. Come if there's matter in thee; for delay  
Is not my habit. There's no living man  
I fear to match with. But 'tis serious work.  
Neighbor Palaemon, lend us all thine ear!
- P. Sing on! How soft this seat of grassy green!  
Now meadow-land and orchard break in bloom;  
In leaf, the wood; and now the fleeting year  
Is at its loveliest. Damoetas, sing!  
And thou, Menalcas, answer, and then he!  
The Sacred Nine delight in answering songs.
- D. From Jove the Muses sprang; the whole wide world  
Is full of Jove; he blesses field and farm  
And all my music has his favoring care.
- M. Me Phoebus loves; and in my garden grow  
The gifts by Phoebus chosen, laurels proud,  
And blushing hyacinths of sweetest breath.
- D. My gamesome Galatea pelteth me  
With a red apple; then she hides away  
In silvery willows, beckoning where she hides.
- M. But sweet Amyntas, passion of my soul,  
Runs to my arms unasked. Not Delia's step  
Is to my watchful dog oftener known.
- D. For my fair girl a gift! I know a place  
Where on a lofty bough wood-pigeons breed.

- M. Ten golden apples from a wilding tree  
I sent my love; ten more tomorrow go.
- D. How oft-repeated are the whispered vows  
My Galatea breathes! O listening winds,  
Bear them aloft and make them heard in Heaven!
- M. What profits it, Amyntas, that thy heart  
Is not unkind to me, if while thy steps  
Chase the swift boar, I tarry tending snares?
- D. Have Phyllis, Iollas, at my birth-day feast!  
When for good crops I sacrifice, come thou!
- M. Beyond all others Phyllis is my own.  
She wept, Iollas, when I turned to go,  
And sighing said " My handsome lad, farewell! "
- D. Wolves are a shepherd's bane; the heavy showers  
Our ripening harvest spoil, and storms the trees;  
'Tis angry Amaryllis troubles me.
- M. Sweet to the thirsty corn is falling dew,  
Buds to a weanling, willows to its dam;  
To me the fair Amyntas, only he.
- D. My simple songs have mighty Pollio's praise.  
Feed a fair victim, Muses, for your friend!
- M. Hear Pollio's own high song! Feed yonder bull  
With tossing horn and hoof that paws the sand.
- D. Let him who loves thee, Pollio, attain  
To honors like thy own! Honey shall flow  
For him, and the rough briar yield him fruit.
- M. Who hates not Bavius is doomed to smile  
When Maevius sings; then let him also choose  
Foxes to draw his plough, he-goats to milk.
- D. Ye lads who stoop for flowers and strawberries,  
Beware! a cold snake coils in yonder green.

- M. Run not too far, my flock! Yon river-bank  
Caves in. See the wet ram his fleeces shake!
- D. From yon swift stream, my Tityrus, turn back  
The feeding she-goats. When the day arrives,  
I'll dip them one and all in some safe spring.
- M. Gather the flock, ye shepherds! lest the heat  
Strike to the milk, and we as yester-year  
Press the lean udders with a fruitless palm.
- D. Alas, how lank 'mid yon full blooming mead  
My bull appears! The self-same plague of love  
Drives both the herd and master to one doom.
- M. See my young lambs, how scrawny! No love there!  
Whose evil eye has charmed them to their bane?
- D. Say in what land — (and be like Phoebus wise!)  
The vault of heaven but three ells wide is spread.
- M. Say in what land the flowers grow scripted o'er  
With names of kings — and make my Phyllis thine!
- P. I cannot choose betwixt your rival songs.  
Thou earn'st the heifer, he no less, and all  
Who either feel love sweet or feel it sour.  
Then close the flood-gates, lads! Earth has her fill!

## ECLOGUE IV

POLLIO

Sicilian Muses, let the shepherd's rhyme  
A loftier theme pursue. Not all delight  
In copses green and humble hedge-row flowers.  
Yet may this music please our consul's ear!

Now come the world's last days, the age foretold  
By Cumae's prophetess in sacred song.  
The vast world-process brings a new-born time.  
Once more the Virgin comes and Saturn's reign,  
Behold a heaven-born offspring earthward hies!  
Holy Lucina, lend thy light and aid  
The while this child is born before whose power  
The iron race of mortals shall away,  
And o'er this earth a golden people reign,  
For blest Apollo is at last their king.  
Under thy fasces, Pollio, forth shall shine  
This glory of our age; guided by thee  
These potent times begin, which if there be  
Some stain still with us of our nation's crime,  
Shall blot it out and from perpetual fear  
Set the world free. For he of whom I sing  
Will have a life divine, and as of old  
See kings and heroes with great gods confer,  
Himself their counsel sharing, while he rules  
Like a good father o'er a warless world.

For tributes at thy birth, O blessed babe,  
The untilled earth with wandering ivies wild  
Shall mingle spikenard, and from bounteous breast  
Pour forth her lilies and Egyptian balm;  
The flock shall come unguided to the fold  
Flowing with milk; nor shall the feeding sheep  
At the huge lion tremble; fragrant flowers  
Shall from thy cradle spring; the viper's brood  
Shall perish, every baneful herb shall fail,  
And orient spices by the wayside bloom.

Soon as this child the scripted story spells  
Of glorious heroes and the mighty deeds  
His father wrought, soon as his soul shall see  
What beauty virtue wears, — in those blest days  
The unploughed field shall yellowing harvests show,  
Full, purple grapes be plucked of wilding thorn,  
And hard-limbed oaks distil sweet honey dew.  
Some traces may remain of that old guile,  
Which bade men vex with ships the sacred sea,  
Or circle towns with stone, or scar earth's breast  
With furrows. But another Argo then  
Shall carry chosen heroes, at her helm  
Another Tiphys sitting; other wars  
Shall blaze abroad and once again compel  
High-souled Achilles to the Trojan town.  
Yet when in after-time the strengthening years  
Have made thee man, from kingdoms of the sea  
The trader's sail shall cease, nor to and fro  
With foreign cargoes ply from shore to shore.  
Each land shall all things bear; the patient ground



Shall feel no mattock, nor the vine a knife.  
The brawny ploughmen from the laboring yoke  
Shall let their bulls go free. No woven wool  
Shall flaunt its stolen hues; the ram himself  
Shall in the meadows wear the Tyrian stain,  
Or change to saffron; and vermilion gay  
Shall mantle all unsought the feeding lambs.

“ Thus let the ages ever onward roll! ”  
So sang the Fates, turning their spindles round,  
Obedient to the fixed decree of doom.

Receive this glory, for thy day is risen,  
Thou child of gods, offspring of mighty Jove!  
Look, how the round world with its burden reels,  
Its far-spread shores and seas and searchless sky! —  
Look, with what joy it hails the time to be!  
Oh, may such length of days be granted me,  
And skill, as shall suffice thy deeds to tell!  
Not then would Thracian Orpheus' heavenly strains  
Nor Linus' voice outdo me; though to one  
His mother gave the song, to one his sire —  
The Muse to Orpheus, Phoebus to his son.  
Yea, Pan himself, though all Arcadia heard,  
Would own Pan vanquished in Arcadia's ear.

Begin, boy-babe! Give back thy mother's smile  
Who ten long moons her weary sickness bore!  
Begin, boy-babe! If parents give no smile,  
What god would sup with thee, or goddess wed ?

## ECLOGUE V

MENALCAS, MOPSUS

Now that we twain are met, each with some skill,  
Thou to give breath to slender reeds and I  
To utter verses, why not rest awhile  
Where elms and hazels mix their leafy boughs ?

Mo. The elder thou, Menalcas, 'tis my place  
To follow thee, whither with gentle stir  
The busy zephyrs fling a trembling shade,  
Or to some cavern cool. See yonder cave  
Where the wild wood-bine spreads its rambling flower.

Men. Except Amyntas, on our native hills  
Thou hast no rival.

Mo. And he would make bold  
To challenge Phoebus' self in rival song.

Men. Mopsus, begin! Thy sighs for Phyllis tell,  
Or praise for Alcon, or for Codrus scorn.  
Begin! Our flocks are Tityrus' care.

Mo. Nay, let me try the song I lately carved  
On a young beech, and tuned the numbers true  
With pipe and voice, — these let me sing once more.  
And judge thou if I be Amyntas' peer.

Men. As drooping willows to the silver leaf  
Of olive, or some lowly thorn-bush bloom  
Beside the red rose, such, if choice were mine,  
To thy sweet music is Amyntas' song.

Mo. Cease, shepherd! To the cave our steps have come.

The Song

His doom of cruel death struck Daphnis down;  
The wood-nymphs wail; and witness of their tears,  
Dark hazel copse and murmuring river mourn.  
Clasping in last embrace her son's cold clay,  
On all the gods and on the pitiless stars  
His mother calls. None drove at such a time  
The pastured bulls to where cool waters run;  
No stream, O Daphnis, and no tender grass  
Touched any four-foot creature's lip that day.  
For death of Daphnis Libya's lions fell  
Moaned loud, and from the wooded mountain tops  
Sad voices flew abroad; for in his car  
Armenian tigers Daphnis' bidding knew,  
When Bacchus' troop he led to dances gay,  
Twining with ivy-leaf his sacred wand.  
As vines to trees, to vines the clustering grape,  
To herds the bulls, to fields the harvest fair,  
Wert thou to all our land the pride and crown.  
When fate withdrew thee, Pales from our farms  
And Phoebus went away. For where we ploughed  
Sowing a goodly seed, forthwith upsprang  
Ill-boding darnel and a blighted straw;  
For violet sweet and red narcissus bloom,  
Thistles and haws thrust forth an angry thorn.  
Strew flowers along the turf, ye shepherds all,  
And wreathe with cypress every fountain's brim.  
'Tis Daphnis' due. Oh, build his lofty tomb,  
Inscribing o'er the mound this votive song:  
My name was Daphnis, dweller in the woods,

Famed through the earth and heaven. My flock  
was fair,

But I myself was fairer far than all.

Men. We hear thy voice of song, poet divine,  
As when on weary reapers in the grass  
A slumber falls, as when in noon-tide blaze  
We quench our thirst at a fresh, bubbling spring.  
Victor thou art, not only with thy reeds  
But master of the song. O shepherd blest,  
Now is thy glory second but to his  
Of whom thou singest. We with equal praise  
Will make thee answering numbers, if we may,  
And set thy Daphnis with the sacred stars.  
Daphnis our star shall be; he loved us well.

Mo. What other gift to me were half so dear ?  
Worthy thy skill is he; and Stimicon  
For many a year has spoken of thy song.

Men. In robe of white, with awed and wondering eyes  
The threshold of Olympus Daphnis views  
And sees beneath his feet the clouds and stars.  
The eager forests and encircling plains,  
Pan with his shepherds, and the wood-nymphs  
fair

In ecstasy rejoice. No wolf intends  
To hurt our flock; no guileful snare  
Threatens the flying deer; for Daphnis' soul  
Was kindly and he wished all creatures peace.  
The hill-tops sing and lift their heads unshorn  
In gladness to the stars; the rocks and woods  
Echo the sacred song: " A god is he,  
A god, Menalcas! " Oh, forevermore

Bless and preserve us! For behold I build  
Four lofty altars, Daphnis! Two are thine,  
And two in Phoebus' praise. Here I will pour  
Two bowls of foaming milk his festal day,  
Two of the pure oil olive vowed to thee;  
But chiefly will I make the banquet gay  
With wine unstinted, drinking at the hearth  
If chill the skies, but in some grateful shade  
If sultry summer shines; from flagons old  
I'll bid my nectared Chian freely flow.  
Damoetas and my singing boy from Crete,  
Young Aegon, will make music; and our fair  
Alphesiboeus trip it in the dance  
As laughing satyrs do. Such be the joy  
Of thy great holiday: whether in Spring  
We offer to the nymphs a votive song  
Or move with lustral rite and annual prayer  
Through Autumn's whitened field. For while the  
boar

Loves lofty hills, or fish the quiet stream,  
While crickets taste of dew and bees of thyme,  
So long thy name endures and storied praise.  
As unto Bacchus' or to Ceres' power,  
So unto thine the rustics' solemn vows  
Shall be performed, as is thy godhead's due.

Mo. Oh, for such song what guerdon can I give?  
It stirs me to such joy as when I hear  
The far-off murmurs of the gathering rain,  
Or billow-beaten sands, or when swift streams  
Through rock-bound vales and vocal cliffs out-  
pour.



Men. Take first this flute of hemlock; for it told  
“ How Corydon for fair Alexis sighed.”  
And then “ Be yonder Meliboeus’ sheep ? ”

Mo. Take thou this crook: which though he asked it oft  
Antigenes, then worth a gift of love,  
Could ne’er obtain. Menalcas, it is thine.  
Its knobs match well; its polished brass how fair!

## ECLOGUE VI

VARUS

The first who stooped her to Sicilian song  
Nor deemed it shame to dwell in woods and wilds,  
Was the divine Thalia. When I fain  
Would sing of kings and wars, Apollo twitched  
My ear and whispered warning: "Tityrus,  
His well-fed sheep best grace the shepherd's trade,  
And unpresumptuous song." Therefore this day  
(Since, Varus, of thy laurelled name to tell  
And lamentable wars, there will be bards  
In plenty) let me wake my slender reed  
To woo the shepherd's muse. Nor shall I sing  
Unhelped of heaven; for whosoe'er shall heed  
This verse, O Varus, and its beauty feel,  
Shall hear our lowly shrubs and lofty pines  
Singing of thee. And naught so pleases Phoebus  
As the page, Varus, that sets forth thy name.

Begin, Pierian choir! In cavern green  
Chromis and Mnasylos, of youthful bloom,  
Found old Silenus in dull slumber laid;  
His veins, as was their wont, were swollen large  
With last night's wine and revel; from his brows  
The flowers were fallen and at distance strewn,  
And o'er him by its handle smooth and worn  
A heavy flagon hung. On him they fell,

For often had the old man mocked them both  
With expectation of a song. So now  
They bound him with the garland cords. For aid  
Came Aegle, loveliest of the naiad throng,  
And o'er his waking brows her finger smeared  
Dark dripping mulberries of purple stain.  
He laughing at their guile, demanded loud,  
"Why bonds and fetters? Children, set me free!  
Let it content you that for once ye seemed  
My masters. Lo, I give the wished-for song.  
For you the singing; but the nymph shall win  
Payment in other kind." Straightway his lips  
Began enraptured song. Then might be seen  
Light-footed fauns and creatures of the wild  
All tripping to his measure, and stout oaks  
Nodding their top-most boughs. With not less joy  
Parnassus stirred when golden Phoebus sang,  
Nor less did Rhodope and Ismara  
Listen in awe when Orpheus smote the lyre.  
He sang how gathered from the vast inane  
The seeds of earth, of waters and the winds  
Were mixed with flowing fire; how sprung from these  
The primal elements began, and shaped  
One soft conglomerate ball, the new-born world.  
Then the lands hardened, and the sea's confine  
Was given for Nereus' dwelling, till earth wore  
Diversity of slow-grown shapes; at last  
Earth's fields looked up in wonder and beheld  
The unfamiliar sunshine, and the rains  
That from a loftier welkin now dropped down.  
Then mighty forests rose; and things that breathe

Roamed few and fearful o'er the pathless hills.  
Then Pyrra's stones were scattered, and the earth  
Saw Saturn's reign. He sang Prometheus' woes:  
The stolen fire; the vultures on the peak  
Of Caucasus; and after these the tale  
Of Argo's mariners beside the stream  
Calling for Hylas, till the echoing shore  
Was loud with "Hylas, Hylas!" all day long.  
O happier thou, were no horned creature known,  
Pasiphaë! Thy love's a snow-white bull!  
O evil-starred, what madness moves thy breast!  
King Proteus' daughters by the curse impelled  
Low'd frantic through the fields; but never one  
Desired such bestial wooing of foul shame,  
Though each was fearing that her maiden neck  
A yoke must take, and oft would lift her hand  
To her smooth brows, to feel a budding horn.  
O evil-starred, thou wanderest o'er the hills!  
While thy strange love's white side is haply seen  
Propped on soft hyacinths; or in the gloom  
Of shadowing oak he crops the herbage pale,  
Or fiercely follows through the scattered herds  
Another mate. "O nymphs of Dicte's hill  
Shut all your valley-gates! Perchance these eyes  
The hoof-prints of my roving bull may find."  
He sang that maid the Hesperian apples gold  
Defeated in her race; and how in tears  
The sisters of lost Phaëton were bound  
By moss and bitter bark and upward grew  
Into tall alder trees. The song then told  
How Gallus strayed by Heliconian springs

And a muse led him with inviting hand  
Up th' Aonian hill, where Phoebus' choir  
Rose up in welcome to their lordly guest;  
And Linus, shepherd, bard of heavenly song,  
His locks with flowers and bitter parsley crowned,  
Spoke thus: "The Muses give thee now the reeds;  
Behold and take what formerly they gave  
The sage of Ascrea, who by song on these  
Charmed the stout ash-trees from the mountains down.  
With these thy music shall retell the tale  
Of the Grynean forest's birth, that now  
Of all Apollo's groves shall be most blest."  
What more? The fame of Scylla, Nisus' child,  
Her white thighs girdled by a howling brood  
Of monsters, when her anger buffeted  
The ships of Ithaca, and, fearful sight!  
Her sea-dogs at the trembling sailors tore.  
Or Tereus' tale was told: what fearful change  
Came o'er his body; the foul banquet spread  
By Philomel; what bloody gift she gave,  
Then flew swift-pinioned to the wilderness,  
But oft returning spread ill-omened wings  
And hovered wailing o'er the royal towers.  
Yea, every strain his blest Eurotas heard  
When Phoebus sang, bidding his laurel trees  
Never forget — all these inspired the song  
Of old Silenus; these in echoing notes  
The music-smitten valleys heavenward flung,  
Until too soon th' evening star divine  
Bade count our sheep and gather to the fold,  
Then moved reluctant through the twilight sky.



## ECLOGUE VII

MELIBOEUS, CORYDON, THYRSIS

One day beneath an ilex' tuneful shade  
Daphnis had sat him down, and thitherward  
Had Corydon and Thyrsis driven their flocks,  
Thyrsis his ewes and Corydon his goats  
With udders dripping full. The shepherd pair  
Were both in flower of youth, Arcadians both,  
And well-matched rivals in responsive song.  
To that same spot, while I was sheltering  
My myrtles from the cold, my chief goat strayed —  
The father of the flock; and then I saw  
Our Daphnis; and he knew me too and called,  
“ O Meliboeus, the he-goat is safe.  
Thy kids are here. Come take thine ease with us,  
And rest, if free to rest, in this good shade.  
Hither across the meads thy bulls will walk  
Undriven to the stream; for Mincius here  
Has mantled his fair bank with rushes green,  
And from the sacred oak murmur the bees.”  
What could I do ? Alcippe was not there,  
Nor Phyllis, to fetch homeward to the fold  
The late-weaned lambs; but oh, a rival song  
'Twixt Corydon and Thyrsis, that were rare!  
My toil and task could wait, such sport to see.  
So both in rivalry of answering song  
Began, with answers prompted by the Muse.  
First Corydon, then Thyrsis, each in turn.

- Cor. Grant me, O nymphs of Helicon, such song  
As to our Codrus, whose enchanting lays  
Are like Apollo's own. But if such boon  
Be not for all, let my shrill flute be hung  
A votive offering on this haunted pine.
- Thyr. Arcadian shepherds, let green ivy crown  
Your budding poet, till Codrus burst his sides  
With envious pain. But if his puff of praise  
Flatter too far, then crown your bard to be  
With foxglove, to ward off that evil tongue.
- Cor. Diana, the boy Micon vows to thee  
A bristling boar's-head and the branching horns  
Of long-lived stag. If he be fortunate,  
He 'll build thy statue of smooth Parian stone,  
The Tyrian buskin to thine ankles bound.
- Thyr. Priapus, a sweet bowl of milk is thine.  
And though thou askest but our sacred loaves,  
Thine annual gift, thou guard'st a poor man's trees.  
For this one season thou shalt marble be;  
But if my flocks breed fast I 'll make thee gold.
- Cor. O sea-born Galatea, sweet to me  
As thyme on Hybla, whiter than the swan,  
Lovelier than ivy pale! when to my barns  
The well-fed herds at eve shall homeward move,  
If Corydon be near thy heart, come thou!
- Thyr. Oh, think me ranker than Sardinian straw,  
Rough as a furze-bush, vile as sea-weeds flung

Along the sands, if this one absent day  
Travel not slower than a livelong year.  
Home with you! Shame! Ye well-fed herds run home!

Cor. O mossy springs and grasses soft as sleep!  
O roof of arbuté shadows o'er them spread!  
Protect my flock at noon-tide! For 'tis now  
The summer's fiery star; our vineyards glad  
Put forth full-swelling clusters day by day.

Thyr. My hearth is piled with faggots of pitch-pine.  
Free burns my faithful fire, and every hour  
My walls are black with smoke; we heed no more  
The frosts of Boreas than the wild wolf fears  
The gathered sheep, or swollen stream its shore.

Cor. Our groves are juniper and chestnuts brown,  
The fallen fruit lies under each fair tree,  
The whole world smiles; but from these hills and dales  
Should beautiful Alexis wander far,  
Believe me, not a mountain brook would flow.

Thyr. Our field is burnt up; in the tainted air  
All greenness dies, and Bacchus shades no more  
The vine-clad slopes; but at the glad return  
Of sweetest Phyllis, every bush will bloom  
And Jove from heaven drop down the wished-for  
showers.

Cor. Hercules loves the poplars, Bacchus vines,  
Fair Venus myrtles, and Apollo bays;  
Phyllis likes hazels, and while these she likes  
Myrtles nor Phoebus' bays shall hazels match.

Thyr. Ash trees suit best the woods, pines garden  
ground,  
Poplars the brooks, and firs the mountain  
heights;  
But lovely Lycidas, when thou returnst  
Wild ash and garden pine give place to thee.

M. So much is sure: that Thyrsis strove in vain.  
Corydon is our bard from this time forth.

## ECLOGUE VIII

DAMON, ALPHESIBOEUS

When Damon and Alpheſiboëus woo  
The muſe of ſhepherds, at the rival ſong  
The herd forgets to paſture, lynxes wild  
Stand dumbly wondering, the brooks and ſtreams  
Turn back their liſtning waters and are ſtill.  
Let Damon and Alpheſiboëus ſing!

O thou whoſe ſhip in wide Timavus' wave  
Toils up the rock-ftrewn channel, or ſteers true  
From cape to cape along th' Illyrian ſhore,  
Prithee what welcome day ſhall bid me ſing  
Thy victories, or praiſe in every land  
Thy verſe, than which none fitlier at this hour  
Might tread in tragic ſock the Attic ſtage.  
My muſe with thee was born and ends with thee.  
Receive (thy bidding woke them) theſe, my ſongs,  
And with the conqueror's laurels on thy brows  
Let humbler ſprays of wandering ivy twine.  
When night's cold ſhade had ſcarcely fled the ſky,  
That hour when on the freſh, green graſs the dew  
Delights our feeding flocks, lo, Damon ſtood  
Propped on his olive crook, and thus complained:

D. Rise, morning-star, lead forth the bleſſed day!  
But I, betrayed, undone, make mournful tale  
Of Nyſa my loſt miſtreſs' faithleſs love;



And though yon gods witnessed her oaths in vain  
Still now in my last hour on you I call.  
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

The hill of Maenalus has whispering pines  
And all its pine trees sing. It hears the loves  
Of shepherds and the ancient pipes of Pan,  
Who bade the slender reeds not tuneless be.  
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Nysa in Mopsus' arms! Let love despair!  
Let mares with griffins wed, and times to be  
Bring timid does and dogs to drink one stream!  
O Mopsus cut thee torches! Scatter nuts,  
Thou bridegroom! For behold, the evening-star  
On Oeta's mountain hails thy wedding night!  
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

'Tis a most fitting match! O scornful girl,  
Too proud for shepherds, thou dost quite disdain  
My pipe of reeds, my she-goats on the hill,  
My shaggy brows and beard that flows too free;  
Thou thinkest gods are deaf when lovers pray.  
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Through our own garden-close I guided thee,  
Thee a small maiden at thy mother's side,  
In search of dewy apples. My twelfth year  
Had scarce begun, yet standing on the ground  
I reached and broke the bending boughs for thee.  
I saw thee and was lost, blind, mad, a slave!  
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

I know that love-god now. By flinty crags  
Of Tmaros or of Thracian Rhodope,  
Or of the Afric wilderness he sprung —  
A boy inhuman, not our blood or breed!  
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Unpitying love a mother's hands imbrued  
With blood of her own babes. A mother-heart  
So hard! Was hers a mother's cruelty,  
Or rather was the god implacable?  
Implacable the god! the mother too!  
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Now let wolves run from sheep, let rugged oak  
Bear golden apples, let all worthless weeds  
Drop amber! Give to owls the voice of swans!  
Be Tityrus an Orpheus when he sings,  
An Orpheus to the listening woods and hills,  
And drive Arion's dolphins o'er the seas!  
Awake, my flute, awake Arcadian song!

Oh, let the seas drown all! O woods and hills  
Farewell forever! From some far-seen crag,  
Some windy mountain-top, I'll hurl me down  
To the deep gulf below! And such shall be  
My parting gift to Nysa as I die.  
Give o'er, my flute! give o'er Arcadian song!

Thus Damon. How Alpheisiboeus sang  
In answer, tell us, O Pierian maids!  
No single singer touches all the chords.

A. Bring water forth, and wreathe the altar round  
With woolen fillets. Burn me fragrant boughs  
And incense rich and strong. Now must I try  
My lover's sober senses to control  
With arts of magic and enchanting songs.  
Bring Daphnis from the city home my song!

Songs of enchantment can draw down the moon  
From heaven; Ulysses' crew to brutes were changed  
By Circe's spell; and bursting at the sound  
The cold-skinned meadow-snake is slain by song.  
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

With triple threads of changeful colors three  
I wind thee round. Thrice round the altar then  
Thy image goes. Odd numbers please the gods.  
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

Let Amaryllis weave in triple strand  
Three colors, whispering as her fingers wind,  
"I, Amaryllis, weave me Venus' chain."  
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

As harder grows the clay and wax melts down,  
Touched by the self-same fire, may love of me  
Soften my Daphnis' heart and keep him true!  
Crumble the wheaten cake! Let torch of pine  
These laurel leaves enkindle! Daphnis' power  
Sets all my soul on fire; and like this bough  
Of burning laurel may my Daphnis burn!  
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

May such a love seize Daphnis as consumes  
The roving heifer when she seeks her mate  
Through copse or lofty forest wandering far,  
And wearied flings her in the sedges green  
Nigh some full stream, by long desire outworn,  
Nor heeds the homeward call of lingering eve.  
Such love be his. Nor would I seek his cure.  
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

These keepsakes, look! these garments left behind  
For pledges of his love! I bury them  
Under my door-stone, O deep Earth, in thee,  
To pledge me Daphnis in my house will bide.  
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

These potent herbs and Pontic poisons rare  
I had of Moeris. Pontus grows them best.  
And oft would Moeris, tasting them, become  
A wolf and prowl the woods, or by their power  
Call spirits out of graves, or charm away  
A planted crop to fill some stranger's field.  
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

Bring embers, Amaryllis, from thy door,  
And o'er some flowing river fling them free  
Over thy head, but cast no look behind!  
With these would I my Daphnis' bosom gain,  
Though of all gods and charms quite heedless he.  
Bring Daphnis from the city home, my song!

But look! a little tongue of trembling flame  
Leaps on the windless altar while I wait.

Heaven help us! What this means I do not know,  
But Hylax at the door is barking, ah!

Believe it, can I? Or do lovers still

Feign dreams to suit themselves? Nay, cease my  
song!

For from the city Daphnis homeward comes.



## ECLOGUE IX

LYCIDAS, MOERIS

L. Where bound, my Moeris ? Runs thy road to town ?

M. O Lycidas, today we live to see

Something we never feared — a foreigner

Holding our little farm, who harshly cries,

“ These lands are mine. Ye dwellers of old time,

Away with you ! ” And we submit to this,

We wretched ones; for Chance and Fortune’s power

Change all things. We are sending him today

Two kids — and may the gift no blessing be !

L. Why, I had heard that where yon hills begin

Uprising, where the smooth, descending slopes

Sink to the valley and the waterside,

Past the old beech trees whose tall tops decay —

Menalcas sang so well he saved it all.

M. ’Twas a wide-spread report. But poets’ songs

O Lycidas, when steel-clad Mars appears,

Are mighty as Dodona’s sacred doves

When swoops an eagle down. Save that to me

Shrill warning at all cost new feuds to shun

Came from a crow loud shrieking at my left

From hollow oak, hardly thy Moeris here

Nor even Menalcas were alive today.

L. Ah ! whose such crime ? Came we so nigh to loss

Of our heart’s joy, Menalcas, and of thee ?

Who else the beauty of our nymphs would sing ?

Or strew the ground with blossoms, or embower

Our fountains with green shade ? Or who but thee  
Would sing that song I lately overheard  
When thou wert setting forth upon thy way  
To Amaryllis, whom my heart adores ?  
“ Till I come back, good Tityrus, I pray  
Feed yonder goats. For I will not be long.  
Drive to the brook when fed; but oh! beware!  
That butting he-goat has a wicked horn.”

M. Or that half-finished song in Varus' praise:  
“ O Varus, if our Mantua but be spared —  
Ah me! a Mantua bordering far too near  
On sad Cremona! — thine immortal name  
Our soaring swans will starward lift in song.”

L. So may thy bees ne'er taste Sardinian yew,  
And may thy cows their swelling udders fill  
With sweetest flowers! Begin, I pray, thy song,  
Whate'er it be. Me too the Muses bred  
To be a poet and my songs are known;  
The shepherds hail me as a bard, but I  
Heed not their praise nor boast myself to sing  
Things worthy Varus or of Cinna. No!  
I raise a goose-cry 'mongst melodious swans.

M. In silence I am running o'er that song  
To see if I remember. 'Tis most rare:  
“ O Galatea, come! What pleasure bides  
In yon cold waves ? Behold the blushing Spring  
Is with us, and the meadow streams flow down  
Through many a flower; a silvered poplar leans  
Above my grotto, and the drooping vines  
Make spots of shadow there. Oh hither come!  
Leave yon wild, rolling waves that smite the shore.”

L. What was that strain I heard thee sing alone  
One cloudless night ? The measure I recall,  
But not the words.

M. " Why, Daphnis, asking still  
What fate the ancient constellations bring ?  
Behold the star of Caesar takes the sky,  
Dione's heir; the star of fruitful fields,  
That clothes the clusters on the sunny slopes  
With purple pride. Go, Daphnis, graft thy pears!  
Sons of thy sons shall gather them in joy."  
Ah, time takes all we have, the memory too.  
Oft in my boyhood, I remember well,  
I spent long summer days in song; but now  
The verses come not back; and even his voice  
Is leaving Moeris. Probably some wolf  
Set eye on Moeris first. No matter though!  
Menalcas often will repeat it all.

L. Look how with words thou hast so long delayed  
My heart's desire. Yonder outspread sea  
Is listening and calm, and every wind  
Its airy whisper stills. Here where we stand  
Is halfway to the town; Bianor's tomb  
Just rises into view; the rustics here  
Have built a leafy shade. Here let us sing.  
Here, Moeris, set the two kids on the ground.  
We reach the town full soon. But if we fear  
The night may meet us with a gathering rain  
Let us go forward singing, for the path  
Tires us less so. And that we may walk on  
Still singing, let me ease thee of thy load.

M. Nay, Nay! good friend. Let us to business now!  
Songs will be better with Menalcas by.

## ECLOGUE X

### GALLUS

Smile, Arethusa, on this parting lay!  
'Tis for my Gallus. Let Lycoris hear!  
Perforce I sing; for if my Gallus grieve,  
Who could refuse a song? So may thy flood  
That flows in secret through Sicilian seas  
Mix with no bitter wave! Awake and sing  
What love and cruel anguish Gallus knew.  
My flat-nosed goats will crop the leafage green.  
Yet sing we not unheard; the woods reply.

O pitying nymphs in what dim grove or glade  
Stood ye far off while Gallus pined away  
With unrequited love? What held your feet  
On slope Parnassian or on Pindus' crest,  
Or by th' Aonian rill? Their mournful tears  
The laurel and the flowery tamarisk shed;  
And where by some lone cliff he lay forlorn,  
Pine-mantled Maenalus and stony steep  
Of cold Lycaeus mourned the shepherd's woe.  
His flock stood round him, of our human tears  
Not heedless or ashamed; nor shame feel thou,  
O heavenly poet, that thou tendest sheep  
As once Adonis in his beauty's pride  
Pastured a flock beside a silver stream.  
The herdsman came, and swineherds trudging slow,

Menalcas, too, his mantle drenched with dew,  
Came from his acorn-gathering, and all asked  
How such a passion grew. Apollo came:  
"My Gallus, why this madness?" said the god,  
"For fair Lycoris, thy fond heart's desire,  
Now at thy rival's side is following him  
Through northern snows and din of dreadful war."  
Silvanus came, wreathed with a rustic crown,  
That shook with lilies large and fennel flowers.  
Pan came, Arcadia's god, — I knew him well —  
Smeared red with elder juice and cinnabar,  
"Canst thou not quit?" he cried, "Love heeds thee not!  
For cruel Love feeds on a lover's tears,  
As grass on rain, or bees on honied flowers,  
Or goats on leaves." Then spoke the sad swain thus:  
"Arcadian shepherds, in these hills some day  
Ye will make verses on my love and tears.  
Who but Arcadians have a voice to sing?  
Ah then how softly shall my bones repose  
While your sweet pipes play forth my heart's sad song!  
Would I were one of you! and of your flocks  
A keeper, or could prune your purpling vines!  
Surely had Phyllis ever been my love,  
Amyntas, or whatever flame ye will —  
(Say not 'Amyntas is so dark and brown!'  
Violets are dark and dark are hyacinths too)  
In willow copses under trailing vines  
My love and I would lie, while Phyllis there  
Would weave me garlands and Amyntas sing.  
Here, O Lycoris, are cool-flowing rills,  
Here softest grass and haunts of woodland shade,



Here in thine arms my whole life long should be.  
Now the blind passion of unpitying war  
Clothes me in steel and bids me captive be  
'Mid thronging swords and foes in stern array;  
While thou in exile — would it all were lies! —  
Lookest on snow-clad Alp and ice-bound Rhine  
Alone, and not with me. Oh, harmless blow  
The wintry winds! and from the sharp-edged ice  
May thy white, lovely feet no wound receive!  
I must away! and let Euphorion's strain,  
My memory's treasure, lend some skilful note  
To a Sicilian shepherd's untaught reed.  
I am resolved in woods and caverns wild  
To meet Love's sorrow, and to write its song  
Upon the trees; then as these greater grow  
So shall my faithful love. . And I will roam  
Where voices of the wood-nymphs sweetly call  
To windy Maenalus. Or savage boars  
I will pursue; no frosty chill of morn  
To me and my swift hounds shall make delay  
As through Arcadian glades our hunting goes.  
Already in my dreams I speed along  
Through rock-bound pass and woodlands echoing far,  
And shoot right merrily my Cretan barb  
From horn-tipped Parthian bow. As if in this  
Were medicine for my madness, or as if  
That god could learn to pity human woe.  
Nay! Nymph and song please me no more.  
Farewell ye groves! Nothing we do moves him.  
He will have no compassion, though we drink  
The freezing stream of Hebrus, or should face

The Thracian snows and clouded wintry gloom;  
Nor if we led our flocks where lofty trees  
Shrivel with noonday heat, and where the star  
Of Cancer burns o'er Aethiopian sands.  
Love masters all. We, too, submit to love."

But now full long, O blest Pierian maids,  
Your poet has been singing, while he wove  
A basket of green mallow. By your aid  
May all be fit to soothe our Gallus' ear!  
Gallus, for whom my love and honor grow  
Larger each hour, as in the prime of Spring  
The alder leaf unfolds. But let us go!  
The darkness of the night works hurtful change  
Upon a shepherd's voice; the junipers  
Love not the darkness, and the ripening fields  
Thrive not in shadow. Home ye mother-goats!  
Run home full-fed! Behold the evening-star!



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